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THE

Letters of Horace Walpole

VOLUME VI.

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THE LETTERS

OF

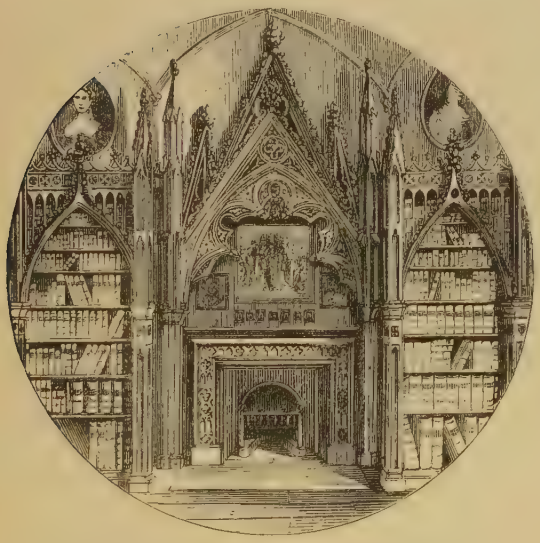
HORACE WALPOLE

FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD

EDITED BY

PETER CUNNINGHAM

Now First Chronologically Arranged



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THE LETTERS

OF

HORACE WALPOLE

1392. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1773.

The Pope gave a fellow, who pretended to know the art of making gold, a purse. Your ladyship has sent one to me, who, I assure you, have not that secret—*anzi*, I only know how to dissolve it, though not to the perfection of some of my contemporaries. I thank you for it, however, and contrary to custom, value the extrinsic, which is beautiful, and I believe copied from some pattern of Iris's. Thank Heaven it is complete, and did not remain imperfect like a *Watergall:* I don't know if I spell well. I will try if fortune can be dazzled by it, though they say she is blind, the first time I play at loo, but I have left it off: the ladies are all Maccaronies, and game too deep for me. The last time I was in town, Lady Hertford wanted one, and I sat down to what they call *crowns*. I lost fifty-six guineas before I could say an 'Ave Maria.'

I swear by all the Saints, that I have not the glimpse of an objection to Lord Ossory's going to Houghton, but an insurmountable one to his sojourning at the inn. Trust me, Madam, he will be almost as poorly accommodated at the mansion-house, except in beds; and unless he carries his *batterie de cuisine*, cook and camp equipage, I doubt he must eat the game raw. The Philistines have been there before him and devoured everything. I shall write incontinently to the housekeeper and order beds to be aired. It is well I did not receive your commands yesterday: I should have sent an excuse.

In short, I had resigned the seals—and did not shed tears. I am plagued out of my senses; cheated, thwarted, betrayed—a very minister in miniature. I plucked up spirit, threw up my office, and hugged myself with my *otium sine dignitate*. My brother has been very kind, and has softened me, and I must go on; but with so little prospect of doing any good, that, without the vanity of a martyr, it will be impossible to persevere. I now conceive what I could scarce believe, that there were men capable of plundering Lisbon while it lay in ruins and ashes. I am almost afraid of trusting Lord Ossory,—as he calls himself Lord Orford's friend, I am afraid he should steal a picture. Apropos, he will find but one young pointer there: two have been carried off in spite of my teeth, though I have gnashed them horribly. To Lord Ossory I am obliged for the first and only notice I have received yet of the sale of my horses. I sent down the lawyer and the steward, and neither of them have deigned to send me a line. They mind me as little as if I was really Lord Orford. Seriously, unless there is an act of Parliament to make all first ministers absolute, there will be no going on. Lord Mansfield is very good, and I am sure would support my prerogative, but the forms of law are tedious: I want to have power of hanging and beheading everybody that contradicts me on the spot.

Now I have vented my own cares, I can attend to your ladyship's. You need not press me to be violent against the Irish tax—follow you to the Queen's county! why, I must cross the Channel, if I have a mind to see a friend I have in the world, and I must carry them clothes too: they will not have a shirt left to their backs. Pray write me all Lord Ossory hears thence. I shall be at Strawberry, and know nothing. Cannot you raise a rebellion? There is a very pretty precedent that I read in the papers this morning from Palermo. They make nothing in Spain and Sicily of shipping off a Viceroy or Secretary of State. Cannot you order a band of O'Bloods to tie Lord Harcourt hand and foot, and send him directed to St. James's? I will be ready at a minute's warning to put on King Francis's armour, and make a diversion in your favour.

Where are Charles Fox, and Mr. Fitzpatrick with the forlorn hope? Come, bustle, bustle, as my friend King Richard says; never despair, you fight for your household gods—they are mercenary folks, and never stay where there is no house.

As to Miss Pelham, she will have neither house nor Lares left. The latter can never believe a syllable she says. It is well our

gods are only made of bread, and I wish she may have a *manchet* of them to eat! Poor soul, I heartily pity her, for she is quite mad!

I do not know a tea-spoonful of news. I dined and passed the evening of Saturday with the Hertford party at Sion—not at the great Sion [the Duke of Northumberland's], but at Lady Holdernesse's. I could tell you what was trumps, but that was all I heard. In truth, I know nothing, think of nothing but my poor nephew's affairs and Rosette. I left her this morning so ill and weak, that I shall not be surprised, though shocked, if I find her dead. Margaret sat up with her the whole night before last; I have sat up half the night many times, and raised all the family. Well! there ends the last of my favourites! I cannot get rid of nepotism, but at least Pope Horace will govern by himself.

1393. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

My dear Lord: *Strawberry Hill, Nov. 6*, 1773.

I have once or twice begun to write to you, and commenced my epistle with, *May it please your O'Royal Highness*, but as I conclude you are as weary of royalty, by this time, as I am of my portion of it, I will use the freedom you have long allowed me, and only tell you how happy I shall be to hear you and Lady Nuneham are well. When you get into your closet and have locked your door, and have washed off pounds of snuff that you have taken against everybody that has approached you, pray, before you double yourself up, take a pen and write me a line; 'tis all the Tax I will lay on your Absenteeship. Mrs. Clive has long threatened to write before me, but the Campaign is not yet finished, nor all the kings, queens, and knaves retired into winter-quarters; so, at most, she can tell you but of a miraculous draught of fishes that she took in a *vole sans prendre*. In truth, I have no better materials. London is a desert, and nobody asks but if there is a mail from Ireland! There is not a new book, play, wedding, or funeral. Duchess Hervey is already forgotten. My life is passed alone here, or in going to London to talk with lawyers and stewards, and writing letters to Norfolk about farms; so that your Lordship is not singular in

[1] Now first published. Lord Nuneham was with his father (Simon, Earl Harcourt), in Ireland, then Lord Lieutenant.—Cunningham.

being out of your element. The rest of my time has been employed in nursing Rosette—alas! to no purpose. After suffering dreadfully for a fortnight from the time she was seized at Nuneham, she has only languished till about ten days ago. As I have nothing to fill my letter, I will send you her epitaph; it has no merit, for it is an imitation, but in coming from the heart, if ever epitaph did, and therefore your dogmanity will not dislike it.

Sweetest roses of the year,
Strew around my Rose's bier.
Calmly may the dust repose
Of my pretty faithful Rose!
And if yon cloud-topp'd hill [1] behind,
This frame dissolved, this breath resign'd,
Some happier isle, some humbler heaven
Be to my trembling wishes given,
Admitted to that equal sky,
May sweet Rose bear me company!

Lady Nuneham should not see these lines, if she had time to write any herself; but Clio hates crowds and drawing-rooms, and I am persuaded took leave when her ladyship embarked. I hope they will meet again in Wales, and that we shall all meet again in Leicester Fields. So prays, &c.

1394. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Arlington Street, Nov. 15, 1773.

I AM very sorry, my dear lord, that you are coming towards us so slowly and unwillingly. I cannot quite wonder at the latter. The world is an old acquaintance that does not improve upon one's hands: however, one must not give way to the disgusts it creates. My maxim, and practice, too, is to laugh, because I do not like to cry. I could shed a pail-full of tears over all I have seen and learnt since my poor nephew's misfortune—the more one has to do with men the worse one finds them. But can one mend them? No. Shall we shut ourselves up from them? No. We should grow humorists—and of all animals an Englishman is least made to live alone. For my part, I am conscious of so many faults, that I think I grow better the more bad I see in my neighbours; and there are so many I would not resemble, that it makes me watchful

[1] Richmond.—WALPOLE.

over myself. You, my lord, who have forty more good qualities than I have, should not seclude yourself. I do not wonder you despise knaves and fools; but remember, they want better examples; they will never grow ashamed by conversing with one another.

I came to settle here on Friday, being drowned out of Twickenham. I find the town desolate, and no news in it, but that the ministry give up the Irish Tax—some say, because it will not pass in Ireland; others, because the City of London would have petitioned against it; and some, because there were factions in the council—which is not the most incredible of all. I am glad, for the sake of some of my friends who would have suffered by it, that it is over.[1] In other respects, I have too much private business of my own to think about the public, which is big enough to take care of itself.

I have heard of some of Lady Mary Coke's mortifications. I have regard and esteem for her good qualities, which are many; but I doubt her genius will never suffer her to be quite happy. As she will not take the Psalmist's advice of not putting trust, I am sure she would not follow mine; for, with all her piety, King David is the only royal person she will not listen to, and therefore I forbear my sweet counsel. When she and Lord Huntingdon meet, will not they put you in mind of Count Gage and Lady Mary Herbert, who met in the mines of Asturias, after they had failed of the crown of Poland?[2]—Adieu, my dear lord! Come you and my lady among us. You have some friends that are not odious, and who will be rejoiced to see you both—witness, for one,

Yours most faithfully.

[1] A tax upon absentees. Mr. Hardy, in his Memoirs of Lord Charlemont, says, that the influence of the Whig leaders predominated so far as to oblige the ministers to relinquish the measure.—Wright.

[2] "The crown of Poland, venal twice an age,
To just three millions stinted modest Gage."

Pope, in a note to the above couplet, states that Mr. Gage and Lady Mary Herbert, "each of them, in the Mississipi scheme, despised to realise above three hundred thousand pounds; the gentleman with a view to the purchase of the crown of Poland, the lady on a vision of the like royal nature. They since retired into Spain, where they are still in search of gold, in the mines of the Asturias."—Wright.

meridian of mine; but I have been such a harlequin, and changed my habit so often of late, that it would scarce be wonderful, if I were to turn Whiteboy.

I am so cowed by having given you unauthentic history, that I must protest devoutly I do not affirm one syllable of what I am going to tell you. I know nothing of the following legend, but

press your lordship to come immediately to London, yet I cannot refrain from troubling you on the occasion.

I hope you will receive this express this evening, and I shall be happy to see your lordship to-morrow, and to discuss more fully all the arguments which may occur.

I cannot conclude without expressing my real concern that the joy and happiness you lately felt was of so short duration.[1]

I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and humble servant,

To Lord Ossory. ROCKINGHAM.

MY DEAR LORD: *Grosvenor Square, near nine o'clock, Oct.* 14, 1773.

I HAD the honour to receive your lordship's obliging letter just as I was sitting down to dinner, and as I wished to give your lordship every information in my power, I have been obliged to delay writing for some hours, that I might do it more fully.

Upon fuller consideration yesterday evening, some doubts rose whether the mode of a *personal* application to Lord North was the most eligible. The opinion seemed to preponderate that the safest way would be by *writing a letter*, because no misunderstanding or misrepresentation could ensue, and accordingly a draft of a letter has been drawn up, which is thought would answer the purposes. A doubt still remains whether the letter should be signed by as many as may approve it, or whether it should be remodelled into a letter and be signed by one, or any other person, who is concerned. Lord Hertford confines himself to declaring that he shall oppose the measure in the Privy Council; that he will talk to Lord North on the subject, but he says from *his situation* it would be improper for him to be in any other shape concerned.

Lord Shelburn seems to prefer an immediate representation to his Majesty in his closet, in which opinion I confess I do not join, as I rather consider that measure as the *dernier* not the primary resort.

The letter I have already written to your lordship would fully explain the object I have in wishing an early apprizing of Lord North, and your lordship would see that the liberty I took in pressing you to come, was, as much as possible, to avoid in the outset the imputation of party, &c.

The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Besborough, and Lord Milton are in London. I believe Lord Donegal is also in London. At this time very few, comparatively, are here, but the misfortune is, that the chief object in sending or writing to Lord North is lost, if many days' delay occur.

I must beg leave to observe to your lordship that I write to you with the fullest confidence indeed in this matter. Where it is necessary to give your lordship information, not only of my own thoughts, but of that of others, your lordship will feel the delicacy of the business.

I enclose to your lordship the sketch of a general letter. If it tallies in mode and in matter with your lordship's sentiments, I am fully convinced your signing it along with others would have great effect. I hope Lady Ossory is so well that your lordship

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[1] The loss of an infant son.—R. VERNON SMITH.

from that old maid, Common Fame, who outlies the newspapers. You have read in Fielding's Chronicle the tale of the Hon. Mrs. Grieve; but could you have believed that Charles Fox could have been in the list of her dupes? Well, he was. She promised him

may be able, at all events, to come to London to-morrow morning; I shall be happy to have the opportunity of fully conversing with your lordship on this very important subject.

I rely so much upon the pleasure of seeing your lordship, that I can hardly bear to suggest, that if you cannot come, I must beg to have the enclosed sketch returned by a messenger.

I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard, my dear lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

MY DEAR LORD: *Grosvenor Square, Saturday night, Oct.* 23, 1773.

AN express overtook me this morning at Hockerill: it had gone to Newmarket in the night. Lord North has now sent an answer, which, indeed, *avows* the measure as *intended*, though from the wording of his letter, he gilds the pill with the plausible pretence that the *object being* to restore *the credit* of the finances, &c., in Ireland, he and others had expressed their readiness to adopt and concur in it.

Your lordship saw his first letter, wherein he puts it off *personally* from himself, though from his *deportment* he is most particularly concerned. His second letter is better covered, but I think it will be necessary that we should make a short reply, and that we should then proceed to send information of all that has passed to every person in England whose property or interests are concerned.

The Duke of Devonshire is going out of town this morning. Lord Milton is in the country, and Lord Besborough is at Roehampton. It will take some time to get forward in this business, but I hope in the course of the week the matters may be so far prepared that, if approved, they may be carried into execution. I see no difficulties but what arise from the distance *we* are all at.

I shall see Lord Besborough to-morrow or early on Monday. I shall trouble your lordship with another letter early next week.

I am ever, my dear lord, with great truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

I long to hear whether you have received any answer to your letter from Staffordshire; I mean such as you may think yourself at liberty to *communicate*.

The expression in Lord North's letter *by those of his Majesty's servants to whom this communication was made*, confirms me, that some of your friends were totally unacquainted with this transaction.

MY DEAR LORD: *Grosvenor Square, Tuesday evening, October* 26, 1773.

AFTER fully considering what would now be right to do, and as we are all at present so dispersed, I found that if another letter was to be written to Lord North, it would certainly be necessary that all should sign it, and it would therefore require so many expresses backwards and forwards, that great delay must necessarily ensue. The same difficulty occurred in regard to the circular-letters, which would be necessary to send along with copies of what has passed when they were to be communicated to the various persons concerned, in every part of England. Near one hundred copies must be sent, and if the circular-letter to each was to be signed by *all us five*, it would naturally occasion many delays. I therefore now enclose to your lordship a letter which I would propose to send along with the copies of the letter to and from Lord North. If your lordship and the other lords approve it, I shall consider it as being

a Miss Phipps, a West Indian fortune of 150,000*l.* Sometimes she was not landed, sometimes had the small pox. In the meantime, Miss Phipps did not like a black man; Celadon must powder his eyebrows. He did, and cleaned himself. A thousand Jews thought

sufficiently authorized, and each individual who receives it, will have no doubt that I am authorized, when I express it in my letter. I believe this mode will save a great deal of trouble. I may be *lashed* as a *meddler*, called *factious*, &c., but I shall retain in my own mind a full defence of my conduct, as I am fully satisfied that in this measure I am acting as becomes any man who has either a regard for England, or Ireland, and as one, who, while the appearance of a free constitution exists in this country, will fairly and openly resist every attack that is made upon it. I hope your lordship will approve the wording of the circular-letter. I send this evening an express to the Duke of Devonshire, who is now at Woburn, and one to Lord Milton, in Dorsetshire. I trust I shall have their answers and approbation by Thursday evening, so that I may despatch the hundred letters by Friday night or Saturday. I may then call at Newmarket on Monday, and make a short excursion to Wentworth, and be back in London by the middle of November.

I hear the public begin to talk upon this measure, and I am well informed that it meets with most general disapprobation. I hear also from Ireland, that many there much disapprove it.

I am ever, my dear lord, with great truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and affectionate humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

MY DEAR LORD: *Mistley, Nov.* 19, 1773.

I LEFT London last Sunday, when I understood from all quarters that the Absentee Tax was not likely to pass the House of Commons of Ireland, and most probably would not now be proposed, for Fortescue, Clement's brother, who had undertaken to propose it, grew alarmed as he found it grew unpopular, and was drawing in his horns.

Since I came hither, I have received several letters from Dublin, one of which enclosed the newspaper I sent you, and referred me to it for the Secretary's speech, which my correspondent says contains the substance of what he said. You will therein read his sentiments on the Absentee Tax. Since that paper was printed, they have had a long debate, till midnight, and a division, in a motion made by Fitzgibbon, "That the distresses of this country require that a great Retrenchment should be made in the expenses of this Establishment." It was a well-fought debate: the members for the motion 88, against 112: a very full house. How the Castle will manage when in a Committee of Supply the new taxes are to be voted, God knows.

I wish I had been half an hour earlier at Ampthill, the day you left it. I am a great enemy to the Absentee Tax, because it affects and oppresses individuals, many of whom are my friends; but I think I could have shown you, that an English Minister run no great risk in giving way to what the Parliament of Ireland proposed for the benefit of their own country, notwithstanding the blustering of a few individuals who were themselves principally concerned in the consequences attending such a measure.

I beg my compliments to Lady Ossory, who I hope is quite recovered.

I am, my dear lord, your very faithful and obedient humble servant,

RICHARD RIGBY.

MY DEAR LORD: *Grosvenor Square, Tuesday night, Nov.* 23, 1773.

THE accounts I received from London, and the accounts I received from Ireland *till* the middle of last week, almost made me believe that the project of the Tax on

he was gone to Kingsgate [1] to settle the payment of his debts. Oh no! he was to meet Celia at Margate. To confirm the truth, the Hon. Mrs. Grieve advanced part of the fortune—some authors say an hundred and sixty, others three hundred pounds—but how was

[1] Lord Holland's seat between Margate and Ramsgate.—CUNNINGHAM.

Absentees was nearly laid aside, or that there was a chance that we might have no further trouble on that business. I am not now of that opinion. Mr. Secretary Blaquiere, acting as Secretary of State in Ireland, on the 8th of this month took occasion on opening the budget *to mention* the Tax on Absentees, and *one* of the accounts I received says, that he declared it was the tax *he* had *a predilection* for, and that he hoped it would meet with a *candid* discussion. Another account says merely that Mr. Blaquiere mentioned it as a matter to be discussed; but the writer adds, *Now I plainly see that Government* MEAN TO SUPPORT THIS MEASURE.

Before I received this information at Wentworth I had prepared a sketch of a letter to communicate to your lordship and the other lords, that if it was approved, it might be sent to all the persons who in our former *circular-letter* we had informed that a meeting might possibly be necessary about the *middle of this month*. In that sketch I had said that *from circumstances* an immediate meeting did not seem necessary, but that if anything material happened they might depend upon our attention, and that we would immediately apprize them, but at present would not give them a trouble which perhaps might be unnecessary. Something of the kind, at all events, ought to be done, or otherwise they may think we are neglectful, but whether absolutely to call a meeting directly or not, is matter of consideration. I have received very many answers to the circular-letter: all in general, except two or three, express much approbation of what we have done, and desire me so to inform your lordship, &c. They express a desire of being early informed, and declare their readiness to co-operate with us in what may be deemed right and proper on the occasion. I much wish, therefore, that your lordship would come to London that we may talk over this matter. The Duke of Devonshire will be in town Wednesday (*i.e.* to morrow), or on Thursday.

I was in hopes to have heard from your lordship. Possibly you may not have had the opportunity of a full discourse on the subject. Blaquiere's naming this tax is a step beyond Lord North's letter. If you look to the letter you will see Lord North says, a plan was sent over; and then adds, that at the same time it was suggested that such a *tax would be proposed*. This certainly meant to convey that the tax would not *be* proposed by Government in Ireland. Nevertheless, Government in Ireland, you see, at least now appear to be desirous of its being proposed, and Mr. Blaquiere calls for it. Perhaps I am too suspicious; but I own I think, that there is a private and secret determination somewhere *at home* that this project shall be pressed forward.

I am ever, my dear lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

I had an answer from Lord Weymouth. He declares strongly against the tax, but declines coming to any meeting; and says, that if it come before an *assembly* where he has a vote he shall be against the tax.

MY DEAR LORD: *Grosvenor Square, Wednesday night, Dec.* 1, 1773.

THE circular-letter was prepared, and copies made, &c., and I shall send them, *though* with an addition of a postcript, which if you have not heard the news will surprise you. A motion was made in the *House of Commons* in Ireland, by Mr. O'Neil, *that the Committee of Ways and Means should be directed to sit again, and*

this to answer to the matron?—why by Mr. Fox's chariot being seen at her door. Her other dupes could not doubt of her noblesse or interest, when the hopes of Britain frequented her house. In

to reconsider the Absentee Tax. The house was thin; the motion assented to. Monday last was the day appointed, so that in a few days we shall have the event.

I think it is impossible that the Castle in Ireland can join or can have been the promoters of this measure. If after all that has passed the Absentee Tax Bill should come over, I am sure it will behove us to be alert. I think we have gained infinite advantage by the *first* event of the motion for the tax being rejected in the Committee of Ways and Means, and being known here, and the *conversations* that have happened thereon. The general satisfaction which has been expressed *among the Ministers*, will make it awkward, nay, impossible to retract. Indeed, I trust and believe that the reserve they before had was merely *discretion*, and that at the bottom their resolutions were *firmly taken* to resist the measure if it came over.

Do excuse me sending you such a blotted letter, but in fact I am rather hurried with various business, and neither my head, nor my old stomach complaint, are quite well to-night.

I am, ever, my dear lord, your most obedient and most affectionate humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

Grosvenor Square, Friday evening, near eight o'clock, Dec. 3, 1773.

MY DEAR LORD:

I HAVE received an account that the attempt to revive the consideration of the Absentee Tax has failed. It was rejected, and, as I imagine, from the unparliamentary mode of the proceeding. It was rejected without a division. I have received by this mail several letters from Ireland. If you had been in town I could much have wished to have had some conversation with you on the contents of those letters. Mr. Oliver, I hear, declared he should move this tax again in a future session.

I enclose to you a copy of the circular-letter which I am sending off to-night. I wrote to you on Wednesday night on the news of the fresh attempt—I hope you received that letter. I trust everything we have done has been well and properly done, and that you are perfectly satisfied with my conduct.

I am ever, my dear lord, with the greatest truth and regard, your lordship's most obedient and most affectionate humble servant,

ROCKINGHAM.

The account came about two o'clock. I was in hopes of a letter from you by the post.

ABSTRACT FROM LORD NORTH'S SECOND LETTER, OCT. 21, 1773, TO THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

IN the course of the summer the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland sent over several propositions for restoring the credit, providing for the debts, and putting upon a proper footing the finances of that kingdom. At the same time he informed his Majesty's servants here that he had reason to believe that among other modes of supply there would probably be proposed a tax of the nature mentioned in your Grace's letter.

The answer which we returned to his Excellency by those of his Majesty's servants to whom this communication was made was to the following effect: That if the Irish Parliament should send over to England such a plan as should appear well calculated to give effectual relief to Ireland in its present distress, their opinion would be that it ought to be carried into execution, although the Tax upon Absentees should make a part of it.—R. VERNON SMITH.

short, Mrs. Grieve's parts are in universal admiration, whatever Charles's are.[1]

I went last night to see Mrs. Hartley. She is beautiful indeed, but has not quite so much sense in her countenance as Mrs. Grieve, and I think will never be half so good an actress. You will be sick of the sight of my letters. I will not even tell you if the Tax is thrown out.

1396. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Nov. 19, 1773.

I KNOW nothing of you: you have left me off. I know you are alive, for Lord Strafford has seen you twice. Yet it is plain I am not out of charity with you, for I have been to see 'Elfrida' [at Covent Garden]; think it was out of revenge, though it is wretchedly acted, and worse set to music. The virgins were so inarticulate, that I should have understood them as well if they had sung choruses of Sophocles. Orgar had a broad Irish accent: I thought the First Virgin, who is a lusty virago, called Miss Miller, would have knocked him down, and I hoped she would. Edgar stared at his own crown, and seemed to fear it would tumble off. For Miss Catley, she looked so impudent and was so big with child, you would have imagined she had been singing the "black joke," only that she would then have been more intelligible. Smith did not play Athelwold ill; Mrs. Hartley is made for the part, if beauty and figure could suffice for what you write, but she has no one symptom of genius. Still it was very affecting, and does admirably for the stage under all these disadvantages. The tears came into my eyes, and streamed down the Duchess of Richmond's lovely cheeks.

Mr. Garrick has been wondrously jealous of the King's going twice together to Covent Garden, and to lure him back, has crammed the town's maw with shows of the Portsmouth Review, and interlarded every play with the most fulsome loyalties. He has new-written the 'Fair Quaker of Deal,' and made it ten times worse than it was originally, and all to the tune of Portsmouth and George for ever! not to mention a preface in which the Earl of

[1] Compare Walpole to Ossory, 12th of February, 1774; to Mason, 14th of February, 1774; Mr. Croker in 'Quarterly Review' for June, 1848, p. 121; Sir Walter Scott's Diary, under 9 May, 1828; and Walpole's MS. note in 'Russell's Fox,' vol. i. pp. 93, 94. "I believe the loan from Mrs. Grieve to be a foolish and improbable story. I have heard him say she never got or asked any money from him. The story, with some variations, is introduced in one of Foote's farces." *Lord Holland*, in *Russell's Fox*, i. 94.—CUNNINGHAM.

Sandwich, by name, is preferred to Drake, Blake, and all the admirals that ever existed.

Dr. Hawkesworth is dead, out of luck not to have died a twelvemonth ago.

Lady Holdernesse has narrowly escaped with her life; she fell on the top of the stairs at Sion, against the edge of a door, which cut such a gash on her temple, that they were forced to sew it up; it was within half an inch of her eye, which is black all round, but not hurt, and her knee was much bruised.

This good town affords no other news, and is desolate; not that I make you any apologies for being so brief. I have ten times more business than you, and millions of letters of business, and sure you might always find as much to say as I had now.[1]

1397. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR: *Arlington Street, Nov.* 27, 1773.

MR. STONHEWER has sent me, and I have read, your first part of Gray's Life, which I was very sorry to part with so soon. Like every thing of yours, I like it ten times better upon reading it again. You have with most singular art displayed the talents of my two departed friends to the fullest advantage; and yet there is a simplicity in your manner, which, like the frame of a fine picture, seems a frame only, and yet is gold. I should say much more in praise, if, as I have told Mr. Stonhewer, I was not aware that I myself must be far more interested in the whole of the narrative

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR: *Aston, Nov.* 23, 1773.

I WAS just going to make apologies to you for my late silence, when I received your last, and to tell you that I had sent up a copy by Mr. Stonhewer of the three first Sections of the Memoirs for your perusal as to the matter, and for that of another friend as to the exact metre and Latinity of the Latin poems, that any page may be cancelled if necessary. I flatter myself that if you like what is sent, you will like the two following Sections much better. I have only two letters to you yet uninserted: if you find more you will favour me with them. I think in one of your letters which I returned, there were some marginal notes on a part of his poem on 'Education and Government.' I should wish to have these, if you can find them, as soon as possible, and before you give me your opinion of these Sections.

You are very good to give 'Elfrida' so much countenance, yet I think I should hardly go to see her, even if old Macklin was to play Athelwold! If I did, it would be for the sake of a riot, which I always loved as the only remaining vestige of English liberty, except that of the press, about which they say there is to be a message to Parliament. Pray is there any grounds for this report? I ask for a very particular reason. There are other folks besides Garrick who hope shortly to give the Portsmouth Review due honour, and pretend that they were the occasion of it. I long to see Garrick's Preface. Mem: any pacquet how large soever, will be sent me from Fraser at Lord Suffolk's office. Mem: also, I do not want to see the play. I remember in one

than any other living mortal, and therefore may suppose it will please the world still more than it will ——. And yet if wit, parts, learning, taste, sense, friendship, information, can strike or amuse mankind, must not this work have that effect?—and yet, though *me* it may affect far more strongly, self-love certainly has no share in my affection to many parts. Of my two friends and me, I only make a most indifferent figure. I do not mean with regard to parts or talents—I never one instant of my life had the superlative vanity of ranking myself with them. They not only possessed genius, which I have not, great learning which is to be acquired, and which I never acquired; but both Gray and West had abilities marvellously premature. What wretched boyish stuff would my contemporary letters to them appear, if they existed; and which they both were so good-natured as to destroy! What

of your letters that you told me the Earl of Bristol said he would sooner read blasphemy than a certain poem. Did this come to your hands in such a manner that it might be ridiculed safely?

I had heard before I received yours, that Lady Holdernesse had broken her head, but I am yet to learn when Lord Carmarthen is to break her daughter's head.[1] I wish it was fairly broken, though my poor living and this goodly estate are to pay for it. I know not how to fill up my letter, and therefore I will transcribe part of an Heroic Postscript addressed to the public on their favourable reception of, &c., * * * but you must promise to burn it instantly.

For now, my Muse, thy fame is fixt as fate.
Tremble, ye fools I scorn, ye knaves I hate;
I know the full-fledg'd vigor of thy wings,
I know thy voice can pierce the ear of Kings.
Did China's monarch here in Britain doze,[2]
And was like western Kings, a King of Prose,
Thy song could cure his Asiatic spleen,
And make him wish to see, and to be seen,
That solemn vein of irony[3] so fine,
Which, e'en Reviewers own, adorn each line,
Would make him soon against his greatness, sin,
Desert his sofa, mount his palanquin,
And post whene'er the Goddess led the way,
Perchance to proud Spithead's imperial bay;[4]
There should he see, as others may have seen,
That ships have anchors, and that seas are green,
Should own the tackling trim, the streamers fine,
With S—d—h prattle and with B—d—w dine,
And then sail back, amid the cannons' roar,
As safe, as sage as when he left the shore.—W. Mason.

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[1] Lord Carmarthen (afterwards fifth Duke of Leeds) married Lady Emily D'Arcy.—Cunningham.

[2] The present Emperor of China is a poet; see Voltaire, and Sir W. Chambers.—Mason.

[3] A fine vein of solemn irony through this piece.—*Monthly Review.*—Mason.

[4] The P[ortsmouth] Review was two months after the publication of, &c. Facts are stubborn things.—Mason.

unpoetic things were mine at that age, some of which unfortunately do exist, and which I yet could never surpass; but it is not in that light I consider my own position. We had not got to Calais before Gray was dissatisfied, for I was a boy, and he, though infinitely more a man, was not enough so to make allowances. Hence am I never mentioned once with kindness in his letters to West. This hurts me for him, as well as myself. For the oblique censures on my want of curiosity, I have nothing to say. The fact was true; my eyes were not purely classic; and though I am now a dull antiquary, my age then made me taste pleasures and diversions merely modern: I say this to you, and to you only, in confidence. I do not object to a syllable. I know how trifling, how useless, how blameable I have been, and submit to hear my faults, both because I have had faults, and because I hope I have corrected some of them; and though Gray hints at my unwillingness to be told them, I can say truly that to the end of his life he neither spared the reprimand nor mollified the terms, as you and others know, and I believe have felt.

These reflections naturally arose on reading his letters again, and arose in spite of the pleasure they gave me, for self will intrude, even where self is not so much concerned. I am sorry to find I disobliged Gray so very early. I am sorry for him that it so totally obliterated all my friendship for him; a remark the world probably, and I hope, will not make, but which it is natural for me, dear Sir, to say to you. I am so sincerely zealous that all possible honour should be done to my two friends, that I care not a straw for serving as a foil to them. And as confession of faults is the only amendment I can now make to the one disobliged, I am pleased with myself for having consented and for consenting as I do, to that public reparation. I thank you for having revived West and his, alas! stifled genius, and for having extended Gray's reputation. If the world admires them both as much as they deserved, I shall enjoy their fame; if it does not, I shall comfort myself for standing so prodigiously below them, as I do even without comparison.

There are a few false printings I could have corrected, but of no consequence, as Grotto del Cane, for Grotta, and a few notes I could have added, but also of little consequence. Dodsley [James], who is printing Lord Chesterfield's Letters, will hate you for this publication. I was asked to write a Preface—*Sic notus Ulysses?* I knew Ulysses too well. Besides, I have enough to burn without adding to the mass. Forgive me, if I differ with you, but I cannot

think Gray's Latin Poems inferior even to his English, at least as I am not a Roman. I wish too that in a note you had referred to West's Ode on the Queen[1] in 'Dodsley's Miscellanies.' Adieu! go on and prosper. My poor friends have an historian worthy of them, and who satisfies their and your friend

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. Since I wrote my letter, which is not to go till to-morrow, I have received your letter, and most delightful lines: you are sure I think them so, and should if they were not yours. The subject prejudices me enough, without my affection for your writings. I cannot recollect now (for I lose my memory by having it over-stuffed with business) who told me the story of the blasphemy, and I will never affirm to you any thing where I cannot quote my evidence. Perhaps I shall remember; the story however ought not to be lost, and may be reserved for even a twentieth edition; no, I don't know whether there will be a twentieth. If what you tell me of a message be true, there will not be one. I had not heard it, but can easily believe it, and I could tell you exactly what it would cost, and will by word of mouth, if I ever see you again: for though I shall get some courtier to direct this, that it may pass safe, I cannot name my authority in writing. The fact is a secret yet, but will not be so long.

I will send for the Life [of Gray] again to Mr. Stonhewer, since the impression is not perfect, and will add two or three corrections and perhaps a note or two, which you may reject if you please. I do not recollect the notes on 'Education,' but will look for them, if I can get to Strawberry Hill next week, but I am demolished both in health and spirits by my poor nephew's affairs. I have neither strength nor understanding to go through them. I sometimes think of throwing them up and going to lay my bones in some free land, while there is such a country. This does not deserve to be so, but *Qui vult tyrannizari tyrannizetur!*

I did not know the Preface to the new Shakespeare was Garrick's, which I suppose is what you mean. He is as fit to write it, as a country curate to compose an excellent sermon from having preached

[1] A Monody on the death of Queen Caroline, printed in Vol. ii. Walpole wanted the reference to be made to a quatrain in the Monody, which Gray probably had in mind when writing his 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard.' See vol. i. p. 1, and compare next Letter.—CUNNINGHAM.

one of Tillotson's. I will send you the volume, and you will return it when you have done with it.

I don't know when the young lady's head will be broken, they say next week. If her heart is not tough and Dutch,[1] that may be broken too.

Saturday.

I cannot possibly recollect who told me the story above, but I am certain it was related as an undoubted fact, nor does it sound at all like invention.

1398. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Sunday night, Nov. 28, 1773.

We are told that he that runs may read. It would not do me, who cannot run, much good, if it were said that he that runs may write—and yet, unless I could write so little at my ease, it would be difficult to find time, as our lord will tell your Ladyship, who found me up to the chin in papers. You, perhaps, think I find too much time to write to you, especially when it is so unnecessary, as he is in town, and I have told him all the news I know, and he may have picked up ten times more. I write for that very reason. It at least shows I think of you, when you are thinking of another, and when I know another's letters will be more welcome than mine. There is, besides, more merit in writing when one has nothing to say, which everybody else makes an excuse for not writing. There is again more merit in writing when one has other business; other folks pretend it, when they have none: in short, if I must write twenty letters on disagreeable affairs, I will write one for pleasure, and about nothing.

I have talked Lord Ossory to death, for my mind runs over, and I have not a drawer in my head that will hold any more. I have lost my memory too, for being obliged to empty my brain and new furnish it, I have mislaid the inventory, my recollection, and know not where to look for anything. My soul is a perfect chaos; and Governor Pownall, who came this morning to tune my spheres, snapped several of the wires, and I write to beg that you would send me some notes to restore me to harmony with myself.

Our lord [Ossory] will tell you about the Opera, and the Absentee

[1] Her mother, Lady Holdernesse, was of Dutch descent.—Cunningham.

Tax, and Charles Fox's debts, and Lord Holland, and Lady Bridget's match with Mr. Tall-Match, and the Duke of Leinster's will, and Peter Oliver's miraculous picture, &c. &c. I only mention these articles to help your Ladyship to catechise him. You are to adore a *bon mot* of Madame de Sevigné, and you are to know that because I have a great deal of idle time, I have undertaken to carry an election at Cambridge for Lord Sandwich. Nothing comes amiss to my universal capacity. In truth, I am in the mean time worn to a mere skeleton, as if a witch had rid me to the sabbat; I am nervous from head to foot; and shall be dead like harlequin's horse, when I am just arrived at the point of perfection. I will take care to let you know the moment I am dead, that you may not expect a letter, and may find a new gazetteer forthwith. I grudge nobody my places when I can enjoy them no longer; but Mr. Martin,[1] who was a little too impatient last year. Now I think of him, I will take more care of myself.

I have not wished you joy, Madam, of Lady Mary Fox's son:[2] I told Lord Ossory I call it a Messiah come to foretel the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews;* but I doubt they will continue to drive the same trade they have done ever since they were chased out of the Temple; and that Charles Fox will not, like Titus, though the delight of mankind too, put them to the sword as they deserve. Pray take notice, Madam, that if my letters are very frequent, they are at least not long.

1399. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Nov. 28, 1773.

Don't commend me yet, my dear Sir; I will be a good man before I die, if it is possible; but at present I am only learning virtues at the expense of all the world. For some time I had wrapped myself up in my indifference and integrity; and hoped the former, like cedar-chips, would preserve the latter, as it lay useless by me in my drawer. The swarms of rogues that my nephew's affairs have let loose upon me, oblige me to produce all my little stock of honesty; and all the service I intend to do myself by my endless fatigue, shall be to make myself better. The possession

[1] Samuel Martin. He had the reversion of one of Walpole's sinecures.—Cunningham.

[2] The late Lord Holland.—R. Vernon Smith.

of one vice, pride, and the want of two more, ambition and self-interest, have preserved me from many faults; but into how many more have I fallen! The fruit is past; but the soil shall be improved. I do not talk with a lawyer, that, at the same time, I am not looking into him as a glass, and setting my mind into a handsomer attitude. When he gives me advice, I often say, silently, "This I will be sure *not* to follow;" for, if many try to cheat me, some are as zealous to make me defraud *for* my family; which, though more likely to tempt me than if it were for myself, shall not make me swerve from that narrow middle path, that does exist, but is seldom perceptible, especially as we rarely look for it but through spectacles that we take care should not magnify.

Oh, my dear Sir, we are wretched and contemptible creatures! Have I not been writing a panegyric here, when I meant a satire on myself, and did not dare to finish it? I am not mercenary, and therefore lash those that are. I pick out a single negative quality, which I happened to be born without, and think that, like charity, it is to cover a multitude of sins! I am a Pharisee, and affect the modest humility of the publican! Well! I give up all pretensions; but I will try to have some positive merit. I never thought of it while I was idle—my life is now a scene of incessant business. I shall never learn my business; but, thank God! virtue is not so intricate as law and farming. My pride,—no, pray let me keep that: if I expel it, seven worse devils will enter in; and I should sell another passion, a very predominant one, the love of liberty. While all the world is selling the thing, pray let me, if but as a *virtuoso*, preserve the affection, which is already a curiosity, and will soon, I believe, be an unique.

Luckily for you, I have not time to talk any longer about myself, which you see one loves to do, even though it be to rail at one's self: indeed, like Montaigne, one contrives to specify no failings without giving them a foil that makes them look like virtues. For my part, I forswear any good qualities; I am mortified at knowing I have none; or if I have had, and Virtue fathered them, Pride was their mother, and, whoever she laid them to, Hypocrisy was her *galant*. Still, if she be not past child-bearing, her husband shall yet have some lawful issue.

News there is none; and if there were, have I time to hear or remember it? There are scarce three themes. The great one is the Irish absentée tax, which the Ministers first espoused, then tried to avoid, and is now likely to be saddled on them by mismanage-

ment at Dublin. They have got too great a majority there, who will carry it for them in spite of England's and Ireland's teeth too.

Lord Holland is dying, is paying Charles Fox's debts, or most of them, for they amount to one hundred and thirty thousand pounds! ay, ay; and has got a grandson and heir. I thought this child a prophet, who came to foretel the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews;* but while there is a broker or a gamester upon the face of the earth, Charles will not be out of debt. Pray, do your crews of English at Florence emulate their countrymen? I saw a letter the other day from Aix, which said that a young Englishman there had lost twenty-two thousand pounds at one sitting. Madness and perdition are gone forth! Is it possible that we should not be undone?

I can tell you of two English above the common standard coming to you. The great Indian Verres, or Alexander, if you please, Lord Clive, is one: the other, Lady Mary Coke. She was much a friend of mine, but a late marriage,[1] which *she* particularly disapproved, having flattered herself with the hopes of one[2] just a step higher, has a little cooled our friendship. In short, though she is so greatly born, she has a phrenzy for Royalty, and will fall in love with, and at the feet of, the Great Duke and Duchess, especially the former, for next to being an Empress herself, she adores the Empress-Queen, or did—for perhaps that passion, not being quite reciprocal, may have waned. However, bating every English person's madness, for every English person must have their madness, Lady Mary has a thousand virtues and good qualities. She is noble, generous, high-spirited, undauntable; is most friendly, sincere, affectionate, and above any mean action. She loves attention, and I wish you to pay it, even for my sake, for I would do anything to serve her. I have often tried to laugh her out of her weakness; but, as she is very serious, she was so in that, and if all the sovereigns in Europe combined to slight her, she still would put her trust in the next generation of princes. Her heart is excellent, and deserves and would become a Crown, and that is the best of all excuses for desiring one. I am glad you will have so little trouble with those[3] that are nearer.

Thank you a thousand times for your anecdotes of the Jesuits.

[1] Of the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Waldegrave.—Walpole.

[2] She had flattered herself that Edward, Duke of York, elder brother of the Duke of Gloucester, would marry her.—Walpole. Compare Letter 1412 at p. 38.—Cunningham.

[3] The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, then in Italy.—Walpole.

It is comfortable to see the world ever open its eyes. If it had all Argus's, it would have need to stare with every pair; but I think it was said of them, that some watched while others slept. Just so would the world's, and would say with the sluggard in the Proverbs, "A little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." The Jesuits have many collaterals, besides other monks. Adieu!

P.S. We have just heard that the tax on Irish absentées has been thrown out even at Dublin.

1400. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 1, 1773.

I HAVE again perused your Sections very carefully, dear Sir, and have made some slight but necessary corrections, and have added a few still more inconsiderable notes. But there are two errors in point of dates of more consequence. They relate to Crebillon's Works and the 'Churchyard,' and I think you will alter them. Crebillon's 'Ecumoire' was his first, and is perhaps his most known work, and is also the most indecent.

The 'Churchyard' was, I am persuaded, posterior to West's death at least three or four years, as you will see by my note. At least I am sure that I had the twelve or more first lines from himself above three years after that period, and it was long before he finished it. As your work is to be a classic, I wish therefore that you would give me leave to see the rest before it is published. A dull but accurate commentator may be useful before publication, however contemptible afterwards; and I am so anxious for the fame of your book, that I wish you not to hurry it. It may have faults from precipitation, which it could have no other way.

I think you determined not to reprint the lines [by Gray] on Lord H[olland]. I hope it is now a resolution. He is in so deplorable a state, that they would aggravate the misery of his last hours, and you yourself would be censured. I do not of all things suspect you of want of feeling, and know it is sufficient to give your heart a hint. As Gray too seems to have condemned all his own satirical works, that single one would not give a high idea of his powers though they were great in that walk:—you and I know they were not inferior to his other styles; and I know, though perhaps you do not, that there

SAMUEL FOOTE.

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF THE
DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

London: Richard Bentley & Son 1881

never was but one pen as acute as his with more delicacy and superior irony.

I have read to-day a pretty little Drama called 'Palladius and Irene,' written by I know not whom. The beginning imitates Gray's Runic fragments, the rest Shakespeare.

P.S. Lady Emily was married last Monday.[1]

1401. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[2]

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 6, 1773.

I WANTED an excuse for writing to you, my dear Lord, and your letter gives me an opportunity of thanking you; yet that is not all I wanted to say. I would, if I had dared, have addressed myself to Lady Nuneham, but I had not confidence enough, especially on so unworthy a subject as myself. Lady Temple, my friend, as well as that of Human Nature, has shown me some verses; but alas! how came such charming poetry to be thrown away on so unmeritorious a topic? I don't know whether I ought to praise the lines most, or censure the object most. Voltaire makes the excellence of French poetry consist in the number of difficulties it vanquishes. Pope, who

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR: *Aston, Dec.* 3, 1773.

THIS is not an answer to your last: it only comes to tell you (in order to stop sending the book) that what I want is the thing, whatever it is, in which Garrick compares Lord S[andwich] to Blake, Drake, &c., which you said in your former letter he had done. When I am helping your memory, let me also correct my own, which ought long ago to have told you that my friend Mr. Palgrave would think himself highly obliged by a copy of 'Grammont.' I think he said you once gave him hopes of having one: however this be, you cannot bestow this favour better than on Palgrave,[3] whose peculiar taste for writings of that kind would make him infinitely obliged to you for such a present. I mean to write a longer letter very soon; in the mean time believe me, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,
W. MASON.

The story shall not be lost, I assure you. I was only afraid it had been said to yourself, but I find to my comfort, 'tis publici juris.

[2] Now first published; and one of the very best of Walpole's newly published letters.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Mr. Palgrave, an intimate friend of Gray, and of Mason. His name often occurs in Gray's Correspondence. He was a person, as a gentleman informs me who remembers him visiting at Mason's, of humorous, agreeable, and lively conversation. He was small in person, and in Lord Harcourt's MS. correspondence, is generally called "Le petit Palgrave."—MITFORD.

celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, could not have succeeded, did not succeed, better; and yet I hope that, though a meaner subject, I am not so bad an one! Well! with all my humility, I cannot but be greatly flattered. Madame de Sevigné spread her leaf-gold over all her acquaintance, and made them shine; I should not doubt of the same glory, when Lady Nuneham's poetry shall come to light, if my own works were but burnt at the same time; but alas! Coulanges' verses were preserved, and so may my writings too. Apropos, my Lord, I have got a new volume of that divine woman's letters. Two are entertaining; the rest, not very divine. But, there is an application, the happiest, the most exquisite, that even she herself ever made! She is joking with a President de Provence, who was hurt at becoming a grandfather. She assures him there is no such great misfortune in it; "I have experienced the case," says she, "and, believe me, *Pœte, non dolet.*" If you are not both transported with *this*, ye are not the Lord and Lady Nuneham I take ye to be. There are besides some twenty letters of Madame de Simiane, who shows she would not have degenerated totally, if she had not lived in the country, or had anything to say. At the end are reprinted Madame de Sevigné's letters on Fouquet's Trial, which are very interesting.

I do not know how you like your new subjects, but I hear they are extremely content with their Prince and Princess. I ought to wish your Lordship joy of all your prosperities, and of Mr. Fludd's baptism into the Catholic or Universal Faith; but I reserve public felicities for your old *Drawing-Room* in Leicester Fields. Private news we have little but Lord Carmarthen's and Lord Cranborne's marriages, and the approaching one of Lady Bridget Lane and Mr. Tall-Match. Lord Holland has given Charles Fox a draught of an hundred thousand pounds, and it pays all his debts, but a trifle of thirty thousand pounds, and those of Lord Carlisle, Crewe, and Foley, who being only friends, not Jews, may wait. So now any younger son may justify losing his father's and elder brother's estate on precedent.

Neither Lord nor Lady Temple are well, and yet they are both gone to Lord Clare's, in Essex, for a week. Lord Temple had a very bad fall in the Park, and lost his senses for an hour. Yet, though the horse is a vicious one, he has been upon it again. In short, there are no right-headed people but the Irish!

As it is ancient good breeding not to conclude a letter without troubling the reader with compliments, and as I have none to send, I must beg your Lordship not to forget to present my respects to the

Countesses of Barrymore and Massareene, my dear Sisters in Loo. You may be sure I am charged with a large parcel from Cliveden, where I was last night. Except being extremely ill, Mrs. Clive is extremely well; but the Tax-gatherer is gone off, and she must pay her window-lights over again; and the road before her door is very bad, and the parish won't mend it, and there is some suspicion that Garrick is at the bottom of it; so if you please to send a shipload of the Giant's Causey by next Monday, we shall be able to go to Mr. Rofey's rout at Kingston. The Papers said she was to act at Covent Garden, and she has printed a very proper answer in the 'Evening Post.' Mr. Raftor told me, that formerly, when he played Luna in 'The Rehearsal,' he never could learn to dance the Hays, and at last he went to the Man that teaches grown gentlemen.

Miss Davis[1] is the admiration of all London, but of me, who do not love the perfection of what anybody can do, and wish she had less top to her voice and more bottom. However, she will break Millico's heart, which will not break mine. Fierville has sprained his leg, and there is another man who sprains his mouth with smiling on himself—as I have heard, for I have not seen him yet, nor a fat old woman and her lean daughter, who dance with him. London is very dull, so pray come back as soon as you can. Mason is up to the ears in 'Gray's Life;' you will like it exceedingly, which is more than you will do this long letter. Well! you have but to go into Lady Nuneham's dressing-room, and you may read something ten thousand times more pleasing. No, no! you are not the most to be pitied of any human being, though in the midst of Dublin Castle.

1402. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 8, 1773.

I HAVE been to Strawberry Hill, but cannot find the notes you mention on 'Education,' and which I do not remember ever to have seen. By Mr. Fraser's assistance I send you four more of Gray's letters; all I can select that are printable yet—I mean that would not be too obscure without many notes, or that contain criticisms on living authors, very just, but therefore offensive. Your book will

[1] Cecilia Davis, known in Italy by the name of L'Inglesina, considered on the Continent as second only to Gabrieli, and in England is said to have been surpassed only by Mrs. Billington. She was a pupil of the celebrated Hasse; and, after having taught several crowned heads, died at an advanced age, and in very distressed circumstances, in 1836.—WRIGHT.

have future editions enough, and then they may appear. I have added an epitaph on West, that he well merited, and nine of his letters to me, that you may use if you have room, reject if you please, or if you please, reserve.

The passage you desire to see, is in the Preface to the new 'Fair Quaker of Deal,' or, as for the puppet-show's sake, it is now called, 'The Fair Quaker of Portsmouth.' Take notice that you are not to suppose the corrections Garrick's, for they are dedicated to him, and he, you know, never flatters himself. You will not find Drake and Blake and Raleigh *totidem verbis*, but what you will find is a new mode of reasoning, viz., that a man, not bred to the sea, may draw a marine character in perfection, because Lord S[andwich], who was not bred there neither, is an excellent First Lord of the Admiralty; *ergo*, anybody that is dead, might have written the ghost in Hamlet as well as Shakespeare. But here is the passage itself: "perhaps some may say that none but a sailor could have made these alterations; the answer to that is simple and apposite; that many dramatic writers have drawn strong characters of professional men, without serving an apprenticeship to the trade. At present we have a strong instance to the contrary in the E. of S. who, not bred a sailor, yet governs the department in every minute sense of it, as well as any sailor that ever presided at the board!"

There is another little misfortune in this passage, which is, that nobody could have made these alterations but a man who had picked up some sea-phrases, and had not the least idea of character at all. There is a rough sailor and a delicate one, which, bating the terms, are Garrick's own 'Flash' and 'Fribble' over again: I leave you to judge who was the author.

Mr. Palgrave shall certainly have a 'Grammont,' but I told you that I forgot everything,—my mind is a chaos, and my life a scene of drudgery. I must now quit you to write letters on farming and game. I have quarrels with country gentlemen about manors. Mr. Granger teazes me to correct catalogues of prints, Dodsley [James] for titles of Lord Chesterfield's Works, and for a new edition of the Noble Authors; at least I may take the liberty to refuse myself. My printer [Kirgate] is turned into a secretary, and I myself into a packhorse. I have elections of all sorts to manage, and might as well be an acting justice of the peace; I could not know less of the matter. All my own business stands still; all my own amusements are at an end. Yet I have made one discovery that gives me great consolation, for the sake of the species. I see one may be a man of

business and yet an honest man. I have cheated nobody yet; indeed, by the help of a lawyer, I was on the point of doing an unjust thing. I spend my own money, and there is no probability of my ever being the better for all my trouble. My family will, but they shall have no reason to be ashamed of their benefactor; that is, my vanity hopes that when the sexton shows my grave in the parish church at Houghton, he will say, "Here lies old Mr. Walpole, who was steward to my Lord's great uncle." Well; that is better than having played the fool all the rest of one's life, as I have done.

1403. TO THE HON. MRS. GREY.

DEAR MADAM: *Dec.* 9, 1773.

As I hear Lady Blandford has a return of the gout, as I foretold last night from the red spot being not gone, I beg you will be so good as to tell her, that if she does not encourage the swelling by keeping her foot wrapped up as hot as possible in flannel, she will torment herself and bring more pain. I will answer that if she will let it swell, and suffer the swelling to go off of itself, she will have no more pain; and she must remember, that the gout will bear contradiction no more than she herself. Pray read this to her, and what I say farther—that though I know she will not bear pain for herself, I am sure she will for her friends. Her misfortune has produced the greatest satisfaction that a good mind can receive, the experience that that goodness has given her a great many sincere friends, who have shown as much concern as ever was known, and the most disinterested; as we know her generosity has left her nothing to give. We wish to preserve her for her own sake and ours, and the poor beseech her to bear a little pain for them.

I am going out of town till Monday, or would bring my prescription myself. She wants no virtue but patience; and patience takes it very ill to be left out of such good company. I am, dear Madam,

Your obedient servant,

DR. WALPOLE.

1404. TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE.

SIR: *Arlington Street, Dec.* 14, 1773.

I HAVE received from Mr. Dodsley, and read with pleasure, your 'Remarks on the History of Scotland,' though I am not competently

versed in some of the subjects. Indeed, such a load of difficult and vexatious business is fallen upon me by the unhappy situation of my nephew, Lord Orford, of whose affairs I have been forced to undertake the management, though greatly unfit for it, that I am obliged to bid adieu to all literary amusement and pursuits; and must dedicate the rest of a life almost worn out, and of late wasted and broken by a long illness, to the duties I owe to my family. I hope you, Sir, will have no such disagreeable avocation, and am your obliged servant.

1405. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 14, 1773.

Pray, Madam, where is the difference between London and the country, when every body is in the country and nobody in town? The houses do not marry, intrigue, talk politics, game, or fling themselves out of window. The streets do not all run to the Alley, nor the squares mortgage themselves over head and ears. The play-houses do not pull themselves down; and all summer long, when nobody gets about them, they behave soberly and decently as any Christian in the parish of Marylebone. The English of this preface is, that I have not the Israelitish art of making bricks without straw. I cannot invent news when nobody commits it.

We have been at short allowance, and lived three weeks upon Charles Fox's debts, two marriages, and Lady Bridget's coupling. We are now picking a duel between a Mr. Temple and a Mr. Whately, the latter of whom has been drilled with as many holes as Julius Cæsar or a cullender, and of which I know no more than the newspapers, who tell every thing I have told you. His Majesty, who though as talkative, is not quite so communicative, will not tell a soul, but *his friends*, who is to have the vacant Garters and Bishopric; and all *his friends* will tell is, that Lord North's friend, Dr. Dampier, is not to have the latter; nay, nor Lord Mansfield's Dr. Hurd. For my part, I guess that Lord Barrington will have the Riband, and General Harvey the Mitre, or *vice versâ*, for I take it for an Opposition lie, that Madame Schwellenberg is to have a garter, and be declared Prime Minister, Lord Bute's panic after such a false step not being yet forgotten.

Tell me, of all loves, who is Mr. Hanbury and his play, and whether at Mr. Hanbury's play they have always two prologues to

an epilogue, as Miss Chudleigh had two husbands. Oh! I mistake, I see it is two epilogues to a prologue, like my friend Mr. Burlton. I like the prologue; Mr. Cumberland's 'Epilogue' is a very long riddle, which I guessed from the two first lines; the short wife is much prettier from not being so gossiping. There is an antique statue of Saturn going to eat Jupiter, which Guido imitated divinely in the 'Simeon and Child,' at Houghton, which I have mentioned in the 'Ædes Walpolianæ,' and which I suppose the bard confounded. I will return these pieces, and send you my 'Sevigné,' a new poem by Voltaire, in which there is an admirable description of an army, and some very pretty lines by M. de Lisle, who was here with the Chatelets; but I must, yes, *must* have my Sevigné again, and La Tactique, or I will never lend you a tittle again.

Poor Miss P. *outgoes* her usual *outgoings*. She sits up all night at the club without a woman, loses hundreds every night and her temper, beats her head, and exposes herself before all the young men and the waiters; in short, is such an object that one cannot but be heartily sorry for. I am sorry too to say that the affair of Lord Carlisle's debt makes still more noise.

I dined and passed Saturday at Beauclerk's, with the Edgecumbes, the Garricks, and Dr. Goldsmith, and was most thoroughly tired, as I knew I should be, I who hate the playing off a butt. Goldsmith is a fool, the more wearing for having some sense. It was the night of a new comedy, called 'The School for Wives,'[1] which was exceedingly applauded, and which Charles Fox says is execrable. Garrick has at least the chief hand in it. I never saw anybody in a greater fidget, nor more vain when he returned, for he went to the play-house at half-an-hour after five, and we sat waiting for him till ten, when he was to act a speech in 'Cato' with Goldsmith! that is, the latter sat in t'other's lap, covered with a cloak, and while Goldsmith spoke, Garrick's arms that embraced him, made foolish actions. How could one laugh when one had expected this for four hours?

Mrs. Fitzroy has got a seventh boy. Between her and the Queen, London will be like the senate of old Rome, an assembly of princes. In a few generations, there will be no joke in saying, *Their Highnesses the Mob.*

[1] A comedy by Hugh Kelly.—CUNNINGHAM.

1406. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 14, 1773.

If your aphorism and the inference you draw from it did not seem to include a compliment, I would thank you, dear Sir, for your letter as the kindest possible, for you reprove me like a friend, and nothing comes so welcome to me as to be told of my faults; the great business of my life being to mend as many, at least as much of them as I can. It is for this reason that though I have lived many useless years, yet I shall never think I have lived too long, since, if I do not flatter myself, I have fewer faults than I had. The consciousness of the number still humbles me, and causes the self-dissatisfaction you have perceived; and which I hope you will no longer call self-love, but a great desire of meriting my own esteem. When I have acquired that, I will eagerly claim the friendship you are so good as to offer me. At present I am in the predicament of devout persons, who sincerely reject all praise, and sigh if they are commended.

With the same spirit of verity I allow the force of all your arguments, nay I go farther. Whatever I feel on my own account, I had rather be mortified than subtract a little from the honour your pen is conferring on my two dead friends.[1] It would be base to rob their graves, to save my own vanity; and give me leave to say, that were I capable of asking it, you would be scarce less culpable in granting it. I communicated to you the reflections that naturally arose to my mind on reading your Work—but I prefer truth and justice to myself, and for a selfish reason too. I mean, I had rather exercise those virtues, than have my vanity gratified; for I doubt whether even you and la Rochefoucault will not find that the love of virtue itself is founded on self-love—at least I can say with the strictest veracity, that I never envied Gray or West their talents. I admired Gray's poetry as much as man ever did or will; I do wish that I had no more faults than they had! I must say too, that though I allow he loved me sincerely in the beginning of our friendship, I wish he had felt a little more patience for errors that were not meant to hurt him, and for that want of reflection in me which I regret as much as he condemned. I have now done with that

[1] Gray and West.—Cunningham.

subject and will say no more on it. As I mean to be docile to your advice, whenever I have the pleasure of seeing you, we will read over the remainder of the letters together, and burn such as you disapprove of my keeping. Several of them I own I think worth preserving. They have infinite humour and wit, are the best proofs of his early and genuine parts, before he arrived at that perfection at which he aimed, and which thence appear to me the more natural. I have kept them long with pleasure, may have little time to enjoy them longer, but hereafter they may appear with less impropriety than they would in your work, which is to establish the rank of his reputation. At least I admire them so very much, that I should trust to the good taste of some few (were they mine) and despise any criticisms.

The note on Crebillon is certainly of no importance, if you, like me in what I have just said, repose on taste and laugh at tasteless criticisms. Your account of the 'Elegy' puts an end to my other criticism.

I have sent you in the manner, and by the hand you pointed out, a few more of Gray's and West's letters, and the extract from the Dedication you wot of. I hope all is arrived in safety—and you may swear, I pray as fervently for what you tell me. Adieu! I must answer three more letters, and in fact have nothing to tell you that deserves another paragraph.

Your much obliged,

Hor. Walpole.

P.S. I have reason to think all letters to and from me, are opened since my relation to Royalty. I know not what they will find that will answer but the blunders I make in letting farms.'

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Dear Sir: *Aston, Jan.* 4, 1774.

I have at last found out an opportunity of sending you safely, what I have for some time wished you to see. I shall now wish for your opinion of it, which you may send me too safely enough, if franked by some courtier, and directed to me at the Rev. Mr. Palgrave's, at Palgrave near Diss, Norfolk, for I am going to Cambridge to-morrow and shall from thence make him a visit. I have led so sedentary a life of late, that I think it necessary to jumble myself a little in a post-chaise before I go to York, where I shall be more sedentary still; if you know a dirtier and less considerable man than J[enkinson] [2] whose name consists of three syllables, you will do me a favour to mention him; nay, I will not stand with you for a syllable. I have laid my scheme

[2] Referring to the Postscript to the Heroic Epistle.—Cunningham.

1407. TO THE COUNTESS TEMPLE.

20th Dec., 1773

I HAD a person with me that prevented my answering your Ladyship's kind letter immediately, which I wished to do, and to thank you for having relieved my mind from the greatest anxiety imaginable. The enormous sum of 800*l.* compared with 300*l.*, which I had thought a very great price, makes me apprehensive that I should seem to have offered far below the value of the pictures, the plain English of which could only be that I would have defrauded orphans for my own advantage, an idea that would make me shudder. If a lady in the country is so amazingly deceived as to expect to get half the sum of 800*l.* I doubt she will keep them till they are of no value at all, which must be the case in miniatures, that must lose their beauty by time, and which makes them so greatly less valuable than enamels.

so that the thing will come out soon after the meeting of Parliament, *nisi tu Docte dissentis.*

And now to answer your two last obliging letters. Your packet came to me just in good time to insert the letter on 'the Cat,' and that on Polimetis; had I had Mr. West's letters sooner, they would have enriched my former sections, but at present they must rest. The epitaph on West I had before in Mr. Gray's hand. But I did not think proper to publish it on account of the author, and because, as you will find I have intentionally avoided mention of that person, except on one occasion, viz. your verses to him, about which verses I should have said more had they not been addressed to him. As I know you think very much the same concerning him that Mr. Gray did, I think you will believe my silence on his subject to be right.

As to your preserving Mr. Gray's letters I have only to say that I wish when you look them over again, you would only erase some passages, as for instance the infantine beginnings and conclusions of some of them, which are hardly fit for schoolboys, and yet will not be considered as written by a schoolboy; this was a liberty I once thought of taking myself, before I returned them.

I must now return to the thing you receive with this. You must know I have expunged a full third of it, about the liberty of the press. I mean to make that a separate piece for hereafter, if there be occasion. It destroyed the unity of this, and it was in that rejected part that I meant to take notice of Garrick's *admirals.* I mention this because you will perhaps wonder at the omission, after what you writ concerning it; I think as it stands at present there is a proper mixture of the comic and serious; I do not expect it will please so much as the former, but I believe it will frighten some folks much more, and you'll own there is merit in doing that. However, as I said before, I shall depend entirely on your opinion as to publication, only give me your assent or dissent soon. I have many more letters to write, so must excuse myself, not only from writing longer, but for the haste in which this is written. Believe me to be, dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

Pray remember 'Grammont' for Mr. Palgrave. W. MASON.

[1] Now first collected.—CUNNINGHAM.

ANNE CHAMBER COUNTESS TEMPLE.

FROM A DRAWING FORMERLY AT STRAWBERRY HILL

London. Richard Bentley, &c.

My behaviour to Miss Stapleton,[1] I hope, has been perfectly respectful, and allow me to repeat, Madam, that my great esteem for her character, and gratitude for having made me the offer of purchasing the pictures, carried me beyond my judgment, and made me desirous of pleasing her by the handsomeness of the offer. I heartily beg her pardon, if regard for my own honour has carried me too far in disculpating myself.

The more esteem I had for her, the more shocked I was at seeming to have acted in an unworthy manner; and I own I should still wish that she should show the pictures to some good judge, and see what such a person would say of 800*l.* for them. I shall always be Miss Stapleton's obliged humble servant, if she justifies me, and I shall be, if possible, more than ever Lady Temple's most devoted humble servant, who I am sure will forgive my not being able to bear the thought of being lowered in her esteem.

P.S. I am prevented to-day, but will have the honour of calling on your Ladyship to-morrow.

1408. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 21, 1773.

It is an age since I have written to you, my dear Sir, but I have had nothing to say, and too much to do. Not that my business would have prevented my hearing common events; the calm of the times and the emptiness of the town have given birth to nothing singular; the newspapers are my witnesses, which, though always full of lies, seldom fail to reach the outlines at least of incidents. To talk of the manners of the age, is the occupation of a morose old man. That they augment, I must not say improve, in extravagance, is not the symptom of my growing old (though I do), but of our country's growing so—and what is the old age of a country? Is it not its approaching to dotage and caducity? If the definition is true, we grow every day more blind, deaf, tottering, and distempered.

Examples are better than doctrines, especially in a letter, from their brevity. Charles Fox, the type, the archetype of the century, is just *relaxed* by his father from part of his debts. Lord Holland

[1] Second daughter of Sir James Russell Stapleton, by Penelope, eldest daughter of Sir John Conway. She died unmarried in 1815.—Cunningham.

has paid an hundred thousand pounds more for him, and not above half as much remains unpaid. How one should detest Lord Holland if one were a father, when he sets such a precedent before the eyes of younger sons! Nay, elder sons must hate him too: they used to think profusion was to descend only like titles in the right line. My thoughts naturally revert to that right line. My poor nephew, I hope, is sinking into imbecility, but the passage is dreadful.

My business occupies my whole time. I have none for politics, public or private. My health declines, and so do my animal spirits, as I am sensible my letters show you. My amusements are at an end, for I have no leisure for them; and therefore whatever curiosity intercepts our correspondence, it will be gratified with no entertainment. I am sorry for your sake that it is grown so dull,—I will not say uninteresting, for whatever touches me so nearly is not indifferent to you. When I revive, or the world is more animated, you will know it, for the lifelessness is not all my own: I am apt enough to be infected with the temper of the times, though but a distant spectator; but I will have done accounting for having nothing to say, which the account itself proves. You have seen me a Proteus in temper; you now find that Proteus's decline is like that of the other old folks.

P.S. Andrew Stone[1] is dead suddenly, who, I remember, made you pay very dearly for the no-protection he gave you.

1409. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Christmas night, 1773.

You must not expect, Madam, not to be scolded, when you excuse yourself so well. You and the King of Prussia, and Major-General Xenophon, shine more by retreats after a defeat occasioned by your own faults, than others by victories. I am now doubly obliged to rate you, for you have made me your ghostly father, and confessed your sins of omission; indeed, we old directors are more tickled with details of those committed, and are so afraid the penitent should forget the minutest circumstance! This part of my office, you tell me, is to be a sinecure for the future; it is well I have so good an opinion of you, Madam, or don't you think my imagination would

[1] Formerly Secretary to the Duke of Newcastle, afterwards Treasurer to the Princess Dowager of Wales.—WALPOLE.

help me a little, as well as you suppose it does in filling up your sentences?

Your reflection on Madame de Grignan's letter after her mother's death is just, tender, and admirable, and like the painter's [1] hiding Agamemnon's face, when he despaired of expressing the agony of a parent. No, Madame de Sevigné could not have written a letter of grief, if her daughter had died first. Such delicacy in sentiment women only can feel. *We* can never attain that sensibility, which is at once refined and yet natural and easy, and which makes your sex write letters so much better than men ever did or can; and which if you will allow me to pun in Latin, though it seems your ladyship does not understand that language, I could lay down as an infallible truth in the words of my godfather,

"Pennis non homini datis,"

the English of which is, "it was not given to *man* to write letters." For example, how tiresome are Corbinelli's letters, and how he wears out the *scelerat* and the jealousy!

The President Moulceau, I doubt, was not *de l'extrêmement bonne compagnie*, and only served as a *pis aller de Province*, or, as I rather guess, by Madame de Simiane, was a man whose interest and credit they made use of. The dates do not contradict one another, but the editors, from an unpardonable laziness, have not taken the pains to range them in order.

The address to Kings is not Voltaire's. I thought I had said it was written by M. de Lisle, who was here with the Chatelets.

As I am here, and do not know when this letter will have got its cargo I will not tell you, all I have yet to tell you, Miss Leveson's several legacies. It would, indeed, be sending coals to Newcastle, to acquaint you with the wills and testaments of your own relations. I only mention the event to wish you joy of Miss Vernon having a remembrance.

Crawfurd I have not yet seen; he called one day at past four o'clock. I am rejoiced he is better, and, indeed, concluded so; he oftenest calls on me when it is low water.

I have not a word more to say; and this being but a parcel of answers to questions, no matter when it sets out. As your confessor, I dispense with, nay, enjoin your breaking your last rash vow, of writing no more long letters; nay, you have not written a long one yet. The god of letter-writing does not, like the god of Chancery Lane, count by sheets of paper or parchment. If your Ladyship's

[1] Timanthes.—WALPOLE.

pen straddles, like the giant's boots, over seven leagues or pages at once, the packet is the heavier, but the letter has not a word the more in it. I am grateful for every syllable you do write, nay, am reasonable, and do not expect volumes from the country; but I cannot allow that a sheet and a half are longer than one sheet, when they hold no more. I speak from self-interest; I write so close that these two pages and a bit would make three sheets in your Ladyship's hand; and then what apologies and promises I should have to make for the enormity of my letters. Well, this is not a reproof, but a mark of my attention to all you say and do; and how determined I am to bate nothing of the intrinsic. This has been a very barren half year. The next, I hope, will reinstate my letters in their proper character of newspapers.

1410. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, 27th [*Dec.*, 1773].

I HAVE seen Crawfurd, who positively denies the accusation of being in health and spirits, which he protests he never was guilty of in his born days. He goes to-morrow to Althorp, and will call on you again as he goes or comes to or from Winterslow. I know nothing of any sort. If the town will not commit news, it is no fault of mine, nor can I help my letters being as barren as the Gazette.

1411. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 30, 1773.

I HAVE twenty letters to write, Madam, but the first shall be to you, as it would have been, though I had not just received yours and the packet from the Duke of Dorset. ' Don't expect I should talk of plays; my heart is open to nothing but my own happiness and deliverance. I shall have time enough now soon to think of anything but myself; in short, by the most wonderful of all changes, my Lord Orford has come to his senses from the lowest ebb of misery and desperation. Now think what physicians—nay, what experience is! Dr. Battie and Dr. Jebb have been with me this morning, and, to their honour, frankly declare that from total persuasion of his irrecoverability, they see great prospect of his being quite well. He

talks and writes perfect sense. They have opened his past situation to him, and told him if he will keep himself cool and quiet for some time, not write, do business, nor see company, they think there is the fairest prospect of not falling back. He has promised all. Oh! Madam, what a burthen does this take off my mind! I shall have no care but dread of a relapse; and may be so happy as once more to be the idlest and freest of human beings. All the world shall be rogues if they will, and it will be no business of mine to reform them. If an empire were laid at my feet, I should toss its sceptre out of the window, and Lord Weymouth or Lord Rockingham might pick it up if they pleased, or my senior Lord Guilford, who is a more rising man, and is just made Treasurer to the Queen. The town laughs, and says the reversion of that place is promised to Lord Bathurst.[1]

I am very sorry to hear the play at Winterslow is put off, not for want of young or old comedians, but on the dangerous state of both Lord and Lady Holland. The former would be happy for him, the latter a sensible loss to all who know her. One of the actresses at Cashiobury, Lady Elizabeth Capel, they say, is to marry the new Lord Grimston. Garrick has brought out what he calls a 'Christmas Tale,' adorned with the most beautiful scenes, next to those in the opera at Paradise, designed by Loutherbourg. They have much ado to save the piece from being sent to the devil. It is believed to be Garrick's own, and a new proof that it is possible to be the best actor and worst author in the world, as Shakspeare was just the contrary.

Have you read the character of Lord Chatham by Dr. Robertson in to-day's 'Public Advertiser?'[2] It is finely, very finely written. I do not quite subscribe to the solidity of his Lordship's sense, or to the propriety of his means. He was a proper Prime Minister to Queen Fortune, who loves the bold, and favours those most who are for stretching her prerogative. Dr. Robertson, I should think, would not be appointed historiographer-royal soon.

The three Graces[3] leaving you! Bless me, Madam, what will

[1] Pope's Lord Bathurst, then living, and the father of the then Lord Chancellor Bathurst.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] It was written by Mr. Grattan. "It first appeared in a collection of jeux d'esprit against Lord Townshend's administration in Ireland, called 'Baratariana,' (p. 240) the editor of which, for the purpose of mystification, stated it to be an extract from Robertson's forthcoming 'History of America;' and this led to Walpole's momentary mistake."—*Croker. Quarterly Review for June*, 1848, p. 113.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] The three Miss Vernons, upon whom he had written a poem so entitled.—R. VERNON SMITH.

become of you! What an awkward dowdy will you grow! What would Juno do without her peacock! What a fine figure will you make in your chaise and pair of turtles, without the body-coach and Maids of Honour following! Lady Spencer could as soon keep up her drawing-room without Mrs. Howe and Miss Lloyd. You are hiring the Virtues, I perceive, to replace your loss: you have taken Miss Resignation, Miss Friendship, and Miss Their-own-good, to repair the gap in your circle: to be sure they are three pretty wholesome girls, and when they are a little fashioned, will do pretty well on your public days; but you can never produce such ungain country creatures in town. They will come with their Christian names embroidered in their arms in gunpowder, and ask blessing of you as their godmother when they are going to bed. Lord March will whisper them at the first public place, and George Selwyn will swear a child to him by the prettiest. It will not do, Madam, it will not do: keep the Graces and the Duke of Dorset at Ampthill; assemble everything that is agreeable round you, shine at the head of them, and do not imagine that your sisters will improve by being educated in London. Where, what will they see that are better models?

1412. TO LADY MARY COKE.[1]

[1773?]

Your Ladyship's illustrious exploits are the constant theme of my meditations. Your expeditions are so rapid, and to such distant regions, that I cannot help thinking you are possessed of the giant's boots that stepped seven leagues at a stride, as we are assured by that accurate historian Mother Goose. You are, I know, Madam, an excellent walker, yet methinks seven leagues at once are a prodigious straddle for a fair lady. But whatever is your manner of travelling, few heroines ancient or modern can be compared to you for length of journeys. Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons, and M. M. or N. N. Queen of Sheba, went each of them the Lord knows how far to meet Alexander the Great and Solomon the Wise; the one to beg the favour of having a daughter (I suppose) and heiress by him; and the other, says scandal, to grant a like favour to the Hebrew monarch. Your Ladyship, who has more real Amazonian principles, never makes visits but to empresses, queens, and

[1] In this letter Walpole tries to laugh Lady Mary out of what he calls (p. 21) her "phrenzy for royalty."—Cunningham.

princesses; and your country is enriched with the maxims of wisdom and virtue which you collect in your travels. For such great ends did Herodotus, Pythagoras, and other sages, make voyages to Egypt, and every distant kingdom; and it is amazing how much their own countries were benefited by what those philosophers learned in their peregrinations. Were it not that your Ladyship is actuated by such public spirit, I could put you in mind, Madam, of an old story that might save you a great deal of fatigue and danger—and now I think of it, as I have nothing better to fill my letter with, I will relate it to you.

Pyrrhus, the martial and *magnanimous* King of Epirus (as my Lord Lyttelton would call him), being, as I have heard or seen Goodman Plutarch say, intent on his preparations for invading Italy, Cineas, one of the grooms of his bedchamber, took the liberty of asking his Majesty what benefit he expected to reap if he should be successful in conquering the Romans?—Jesus! said the King, peevishly; why the question answers itself. When we have overcome the Romans, no province, no town, whether Greek or barbarian, will be able to resist us: we shall at once be masters of all Italy. Cineas after a short pause replied, And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?—Do next? answered Pyrrhus; why, seize Sicily. Very likely, quoth Cineas; but will that put an end to the war?—The gods forbid! cried his Majesty: when Sicily is reduced, Libya and Carthage will be within our reach. And then, without giving Cineas time to put in a word, the heroic Prince ran over Africa, Greece, Asia, Persia, and every other country he had ever heard of upon the face of God's earth; not one of which he intended should escape his victorious sword. At last, when he was at the end of his geography, and a little out of breath, Cineas watched his opportunity, and said quietly, Well, Sire, and when we have conquered all the world, what are we to do then?—Why, then, said his Majesty, extremely satisfied with his own prowess, we will live at our ease; we will spend whole days in banqueting and carousing, and will think of nothing but our pleasures.

Now, Madam, for the application. Had I had the honour a few years ago of being your confidential Abigail, when you meditated a visit to Princess Esterhazy, I would have ventured to ask your Ladyship of what advantage her acquaintance would be to you? Probably you would have told me, that she would introduce you to several Electresses and Margravines, whose courts you would visit. That having conquered all their hearts, as I am persuaded you

would, your next jaunt should be to Hesse; from whence it would be but a trip to Aix, where Madame de Rochouart lives. Soaring from thence you would repair to the Imperial court at Vienna, where resides the most august, most virtuous, and most plump of empresses and queens—no, I mistake—I should only have said, of empresses; for her Majesty of Denmark, God bless her! is reported to be full as virtuous, and three stone heavier. Shall not you call at Copenhagen, Madam? If you do, you are next door to the Czarina, who is the quintessence of friendship, as the Princess Daskioff says, whom, next to the late Czar, her Muscovite Majesty loves above all the world. Asia, I suppose, would not enter into your Ladyship's system of conquest; for, though it contains a sight of queens and sultanas, the poor ladies are locked up in abominable places, into which I am sure your ladyship's amity would never carry you—I think they call them seraglios. Africa has nothing but empresses stark-naked; and of complexions directly the reverse of your alabaster. They do not reign in their own right; and what is worse, the emperors of those barbarous regions wear no more robes than the sovereigns of their hearts.—And what are princes and princesses without velvet and ermine? As I am not a jot a better geographer than King Pyrrhus, I can at present recollect but one lady more who reigns alone, and that is her Majesty of Otaheite, lately discovered by Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander; and for whom your Ladyship's compassionate breast must feel the tenderest emotions, she having been cruelly deprived of her faithful minister and lover Tobiu, since dead at Batavia.

Well, Madam, after you should have given me the plan of your intended expeditions, and not left a queen regent on the face of the globe unvisited, I would ask what we were to do next?—Why then, dear Abigail, you would have said, we will retire to Notting Hill,[1] we will plant shrubs all the morning, read Anderson's Royal Genealogies all the evening; and once or twice a week I will go to Gunnersbury and drink a bottle with Princess Amelia.—Alas, dear lady! and cannot you do all that without skuttling from one end of the world to the other?—This was the upshot of all Cineas's inquisitiveness: and this is the pith of this tedious letter from, Madam, your ladyship's most faithful Aulic Counsellor and humble admirer.

[1] Where Lady Mary Coke at this time lived.—CUNNINGHAM

1413. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 30, 1773.

Oh! my dear Sir, you need not make any apologies about the lady,[1] who is so angry with your tribunals, and a little with you. If you have yet received the letter I wrote to you concerning her some time ago, you will have seen that I cannot be surprised at what has happened. It is a very good heart, with a head singularly awry; in short, an extraordinary character even in this soil of phenomena. Though a great lady, she has a rage for great personages, and for being one of them herself; and with these pretensions, and profound gravity, has made herself ridiculous at home, and delighted *de promener sa folie par toute l'Europe*. Her perseverance and courage are insurmountable, as she showed in her conduct with her husband[2] and his father, in which contest she got the better. Her virtue is unimpeachable, her friendship violent, her anger deaf to remonstrances. She has cried for forty people, and quarrelled with four hundred. As her understanding is not so perfect as her good qualities, she is not always in the right, nor skilful in making a retreat. I endeavoured to joke her out of her heroine-errantry, but it was not well taken.[3] As she does the strangest things upon the most serious consideration, she had no notion that her measures were not prudent and important; and, therefore, common sense, not delivered as an oracle, only struck her as ludicrous. This offence, and the success of my niece in a step equally indiscreet, has a little cooled our intimacy; but, as I know her intrinsic worth, and value it, I beg you will only smile at her pouting, and assist her as much as you can. She might be happy and respected, but will always be miserable, from the vanity of her views, and her passion for the extraordinary. She idolized the Empress-Queen, who did not correspond with equal sentiments. The King of Prussia, with more feminine malice, would not indulge her even with a sight of him; her non-reception at Parma is of the same stuff; and I am amazed that the littleness she has seen in so many sovereigns has not cured her of Royal admira-

[1] Lady Mary Coke.—Walpole.

[2] Lord Coke was half mad. His father and he confined her. She swore the peace against her husband, and the King's Bench ordered her own family to have access to her; soon after which Lord Leicester and Lord Coke consented to her living at Sudbrook, the villa of her mother.—Walpole.

[3] See the Letter, ante, p. 38.—Cunningham.

tions. These Solomons delight to sit to a maker of wax-work, and to have their effigies exhibited round Europe, and yet lock themselves up in their closets when a Queen of Sheba comes to stare at their wisdom!

I am glad you are not likely to be embarrassed with our Court-ambulant. How you must dread your countrymen and women, from the highest to the lowest! Such a fund of follies, for which you must seem answerable without any power of control!

Thank you for the Gazette on the 'Gunpowder Plot.'[1] How amazing that the Jesuits should have preserved that paper, after so long warning of their fate! Did they think it a monument that would redound to their honour?

My nephew [Lord Orford], after being for nine weeks at the lowest pitch of deplorable frenzy, has suddenly emerged to a strange degree of reason, and has written three letters with more coolness and clearness than he did almost when he was, what was called, in his senses. I am afraid to flatter myself with the thought of this being a recovery; and as much alarmed lest he should avail himself of this interval to deceive his attendants, and do himself some harm.

Dec. 31*st.*

Doctors Battie and Jebb have confirmed the wonderful recovery of Lord Orford, and though so contradictory to the sentence they had pronounced upon him three weeks ago, have the fairness to own their mistake and surprise. He is in fact come to his senses so much, that they have opened his whole case to him, and told him that they expect he will be quite well if he keeps himself cool and quiet for some time, neither writing letters nor seeing company, which he has promised. Dr. Jebb is, I think, rather less sanguine than Battie.

Don't imagine that my mind is so occupied with these affairs, that I neglect talking to you of anything else. The times are favourable to indulging one's own reveries. The Parliament is met, but the Opposition is so quiet, that even their general, Lord Rockingham, is not come to town; nor does anybody foresee one hostile debate. The Duke of Richmond alone maintains the war, but in that distant quarter the India-House, where he has given the Ministerial forces a great defeat. It is not a season more fruitful of foreign news, unless a cloud in Russia increases to a storm. An impostor[2] there, who calls himself Peter III., claims the crown for his pretended son,

[1] The plan of which was found in the Jesuits' College at Rome.—WALPOLE.
[2] His name was Pugatscheff.—WALPOLE.

and has beaten the troops sent against him. I shall not wonder if this attempt costs him, and the great Duke himself, their lives: nor shall I be surprised if France or Prussia has conjured up this phantom.

Methinks, I wish Lady Mary had left you. Her disposition will always raise storms, and you may be involved in them as innocently as you have been. I expected to hear of her in some strange fracas at Rome; and as there is another Archduchess at Naples, whatever vision she is disappointed in, will be laid to the implacability of Juno.[1] For yourself, however, you may be easy, for nobody here sees Lady Mary's disasters in a serious light.

What can I tell you else? The Opera is a kind of Italian news: Miss Davis has great success. I cannot say she charms me. Her knowledge of music seems greater than her taste; or perhaps it is that I do not like the new taste. Milico is jealous of her, and they make something like parties; but operas are not upon the footing now of creating much discord. They are ill attended; and the burlettas are so bad, and the dancers so execrable, that the managers are afraid of not being able to go on. What shall I tell you has succeeded to politics and pleasures? nothing. Nothing has beaten out everything. The Maccaronis, amongst whom exists the only symptom of vivacity, are all undone: and can distinguish themselves by insensibility alone. They neither feel for their families nor themselves. How long this general lethargy will last I do not know. I remember when it would have grieved me. Adieu!

1414. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 5, 1774.

The physicians continue to flatter us with the fairest hopes of Lord Orford's recovery, yet I am far from seeing any solid ground to build on. He persists in only whispering, is impatient of all contradiction, cannot without authority be kept from wine, thinks of nothing but his dogs and horses, and the physicians themselves are afraid of telling him they are gone. My anxiety, instead of being lessened, is doubled. I dare not contradict the faculty, who, I fear, have been rash. I dread a relapse; I dread still more the consequences of a sudden release. The physicians have said he is so well,

[1] The Empress-Queen.—Walpole.

that all his acquaintance are pouring in upon him, and yet I am told I must keep him quiet and admit nobody. My whole time is employed in sending messages to his house; while everyone gives me different advice, and expects I should attend to every contrariety; but though you are so very kind, Madam, as to interest yourself in my perplexed and grievous situation, ought I to weary you with the circumstances? Any other subject is preferable; but I have no news, and if I spin out of my own bowels, what can I find there but the poison I have been swallowing these eight months?

The character of Lord Chatham was written by the Irish Mr. Flood,[1] and published in Dublin a year ago in a book called 'Baratariana.' Indeed there was little probability of its being the work of Dr. Robertson: could so much truth come out of Nazareth?

The play at Cashiobury is much vaunted, both for acting and magnificence. Mr. Cradock,[2] author of a bad tragedy called 'Zobeide,' was introduced between the acts to repeat Gray's Eton 'Ode.' It is a pity Sir Ralph Pain was not here to pronounce an oration of Demosthenes or Hurlothrumbo. I have seen the 'Christmas Tale:' it is a due mixture of opera, tragedy, comedy, and pantomime, with beautiful scenes. This effort of genius is, among others, given to me:—one of the penalties one pays for having played the fool, is to be suspected of being a greater fool, and oftener than one is. Not that I complain, for I am a considerable gainer on the balance of false reputation. If the 'School for Wives,' and the 'Christmas Tale,' were laid to me, so was 'The Heroic Epistle.' I could certainly have written the two former, but not the latter. Both show for what judges men become authors. I dare say the Heroic bard is as much offended at being confounded with me, as I am with the others, and with more reason. Mediocrity is much nearer to the bottom than to the top; but here am I talking of common writers, when I can tell you of a noble one to be enrolled in my 'Catalogue.' The present Lord Granby is an author, and has written a poem on 'Charity;' and in prose a 'Modest Apology for Adultery.' I am even assured they have been printed and published; I much doubt the latter, but have employed emissaries to find out the truth. They say his lordship writes in concert with a very clever young man, whose name I have forgotten.

I condole for your loss of the Graces, and the breaking up of your

[1] No. By Mr. Grattan. See p. 37.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] The friend of Goldsmith and Johnson.—CUNNINGHAM.

Academy.'[1] Methinks I wish Lord Ossory would employ Sir Joshua on a large picture like Rubens in the Luxembourg. Lady Anne's education will certainly turn out better than that of Mary de' Medici. You must hold her in your lap: our lord, like Mercury, introduces the three Vernons, and with so much truth, you would not want allegory, which I do not love. You will stare at a strange notion of mine: if it appears even a mad one do not wonder. Had I children, my utmost endeavours should be to breed them musicians. Considering I have no ear, nor ever thought of music, the preference seems odd; and yet it is embraced on frequent reflection. In short, Madam, as my aim would be to make them happy, I think it the most probable method. It is a resource will last their lives, unless they grow deaf: it depends on themselves, not on others; always amuses and soothes, if not consoles; and of all fashionable pleasures is the cheapest. It is capable of fame, without the danger of criticism; is susceptible of enthusiasm, without being priest-ridden; and unlike other mortal passions, is sure of being gratified even in Heaven.[2]

1415. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, *Jan.* 14, 1774.

WHOM I respect and admire more and more, do not be surprised at my sending an express: the subject of your letter is of too much consequence to venture the answer by the post, and I do not mind the expense, when it is to show my zeal for you and *the cause*, and enables me to speak more plainly.

Never was a man less fit to give advice than I, who want it myself to the highest degree. I am in all lights in the most difficult and delicate situation upon earth, and have half lost my senses myself with fatigue, plagues, anxiety and dread, for my nephew, my family, and my character. In short, Lord Orford is at once amazingly come to his senses, that is, to those he had or had not, before this time twelvemonth. The physicians, who must act by rules, declare they shall leave him this day month, because they dare not do otherwise by law. He will relapse, and perhaps kill himself, and

[1] This alludes, I think, to the picture of the 'Infant Academy,' by Sir Joshua Reynolds, now (1857) in the possession of Lord Palmerston.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] So Waller:—

For all we know
Of what the blessed do above,
Is that they sing and that they love.

—CUNNINGHAM.

I dare not stop them or him. My character is at stake and will suffer, whether I release or restrain him; indeed I cannot restrain him. Judge of my situation without my tiring you with it! Judge too of my perplexity about what you have sent me.[1] It is glorious—it is truth; has the noblest dignity of authoritative poetry,—must do good,—is wanted. Your country wants an avenger; you can do what a whole dirty nation will not do. Then what am I that would check your career a moment; yet hear me. Dr. —— [Wharton?] delivered it to me with great marks of apprehension, and protested he knew not what it contained; that he was ordered to deliver it to a person who was to call for it. This struck me extremely; the person I conclude is Almon [the bookseller], whom I know and have found to be a rogue. He has already bragged, such a poem was coming out, and remember if he guesses the author, that you must manage him. Money will be offered him to tell, and he will take it and tell. Hence arises my first difficulty, and on your account, who I am sure would not for the world hurt Dr. —— whom Almon will name. My next difficulty is relating to myself. If Dr. ——, whom I cannot know, should name me, it would fall on one whom I am as tender of as myself, the Duchess of Gloucester.

Do not imagine my paltry connection with royalty has changed me. I despise it, lament it,—did my utmost to prevent it, and am hated both by those who are angry at it, and by *Him* whom I would not humour in it. I have braved the King's resentment, and am ill-used by the Duke, whom I would not encourage. It is not for him I fear, but for my poor niece. If her uncle could be proved to be privy to your piece, she would be still more undone than she is; nay, what could I say, if the Dr. should name me? I never could tell a lie without colouring, and I trust you know that my heart is set on acting uprightly; that I lament my faults, and study to correct myself; in short, I would give the world the poem had gone to the press without coming to me in the manner it did. Do not imagine that a man who thinks and tells you he should colour if he lied, would betray you to save his life. I give you my honour that I have not to the dearest friend I have, named you for author of the other, nor would for this. I can answer for myself; I cannot for the Dr., and I dare not hazard the Duchess.

The result, therefore, of all is that I wish you could contrive to convey the poem to Almon without the intervention of Dr.

[1] The 'Postscript to the Heroic Epistle.'—CUNNINGHAM.

——, whom I may mistake, but who seemed uneasy; and as he did not venture to trust me with his knowledge of the contents, I am not in the wrong to be unwilling to trust. I will keep it till I get your answer; and shall enjoy reading it over and over. If it is more serious than the former, though it has infinite humour too, the majesty of the bard, equal to that of the Welsh bards, more than compensates. If it appears, as I hope, I will write to you upon it, as a new poem, *in which I am much disappointed, and think it very unequal to the first.* (This is the common style of little critics, who I remember said just so of the three last parts of the 'Essay on Man.') It will be hard if my letter is not opened at the post, when we wish it should. I am alone disappointed in not finding a hecatomb offered to Algernon Sydney,—that worst deed of the worst plan; for what is so criminal as a settled plot to depreciate virtue? I hope it is in the part on the press. I can give fifty additional motives and proofs to whet your anger.

How I wish I could see you but for a day: I am chained here by the foot to a madman; but can I avoid wishing you could steal to town for a day. It might be a secret; I would come to you wherever you would appoint. At least acquit me of royalty or court-serving. I am not a traitor—I am not corrupted: I am hated at Court, and detest it. Keep my letter and print it in the 'Gazette' either before or after my death, if I deceive you. Tell, show here, under my hand, that I exhorted you to publish both the 'Heroic Epistle' and the 'Postscript.'

I glory in having done so, but I own I would not have you risk hurting Dr. ——, nor would I have my niece, who is ignorant and innocent, suffer for the participation of her uncle and your friend,

HOR. WALPOLE.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Palgrave, Jan.* 15, 1774.

YOU are under much greater apprehensions than you need to be on this subject. Hear a plain narrative. I sent up the pacquet to the Dr. by Mr. Varelst's servant, desired him, the Dr., to send it to you by some safe hand, and when he had received it back, to keep it till called for. The person who was to call for it was not by any means him whom you suspect, but the young man who received the ten golden guineas[2] for the last. He cannot come to town these ten days, and when he does, I meant that he should negotiate this matter as he did the former. On his prudence and good management I can fully rely. As to the Dr. you may be quite as easy on his subject, and have nothing to do but to seal the pacquet up, and send it to him by your servant with charge to deliver it into his own hand. If after all you have any

[2] "Ten glittering orbs." See Mr. Croker, in 'Quarterly Review' for June, 1851, p. 151.—CUNNINGHAM.

1416. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 19, 1774.

I was disappointed, Madam, in not seeing Lord Ossory, who was promised to us on the birth-day. I hope there was no graver reason for his not coming, than not having a coat trimmed with Brussels-point, or buttons to his clothes, edged with fur, which our English travellers, who never see good company at Paris, are made to believe by their tailors, are French fashions, and which I, who did live in good company, never beheld there; nor, indeed, anything in dress that was very absurd. Singularities grow here, and are not exotic. If French dragoons kill themselves, it is to be *à l'Angloise.* The most singular thing at present is, there being no news; not an event since the destruction at Winterslow,[1] where, I hear, that next day they drank to Ste. Fox's *fire-side.* Oh! yes, there is a bit of news; General Græme has resigned his places about the Queen, and old Hermes of Salisbury, father of Harris at Berlin,[2] is made Her Majesty's Secretary *à la* Guilford. I am glad to find that at my age, one may still be a rising young man, and succeed one's ancestors.

In Russia there is laid a great political egg—if it does but hatch. Nothing less than a revolt. An impostor has declared himself Peter III., and demands the crown for the Great Duke, his pretended son, who, he says, is kept down by an infamous regency.

fears as being made privy to it, I give you full liberty to burn it instantly; and as there is no other copy extant, you may be assured it will perish completely. A[lmon] knows nothing about the matter yet, and was it now in his hands would make no use of it, till the beginning of a new month, for his own pecuniary reasons. And the apparent Marcellus will vanish as soon as the interview is over, that is, if I permit the interview; but this I shall not do till I hear from you again, which I wish to do at my return to Cambridge, whither I mean to go from hence on Monday the 24th; but for God's sake no more expresses. I have been at my wits'end to account for this to my present host [Mr. Palgrave], but have made a tolerable excuse. In your letter you need only say whether or no you permit me to publish those letters of Mr. Gray's, which you lately sent me, and I shall understand you. Was I to come to town in the present crisis, and be seen by any person, it would cause more suspicion than any thing else; indeed in my own opinion it would be the only dangerous step that could be taken in the whole transaction. I cannot write more at present, except that I am

Extremely yours,

W. Mason.

[1] Winterslow House, the mansion of Lord Holland, was burned to the ground.—R. Vernon Smith.

[2] Harris of Berlin was the first Lord Malmesbury, whose 'Diary' is so entertaining. See Walpole's 'Memoirs of George III.,' Vol. i., p. 225.—Cunningham.

This man may be the Great Duke's father, but the Czarina took due care that he should not be *her* husband. However, he has defeated some of her troops, is marching to Moscow, and she dares not send away the recruits to the army. I heartily wish the Pretender success, and I should be glad to see revolutions, not only in Russia, but in Sweden, Prussia, and Austria.

My nephew continues mending, but I doubt his recovery cannot be depended upon. I would compound for his remaining as well as the Duchess of Queensberry, and such out-pensioners of Bedlam.

I am ashamed to send this scrap by itself, but what can I do? the secret of making events is lost. Nobody makes even a debate but the Duke of Richmond, and I know no more of Indian politics than I did of farming, a year ago. All the marriageable Royal Family is married, and the next generation of princes is not ripe. Pactolus is dry both in Bengal and at Almack's: and even Juno, the Goddess of match-making, forbids the bans, instead of tying them. Pray therefore, Madam, excuse my not knowing nothing. My pen has been listening all day for your service, but can tell you nothing newer than how much I am, &c.

1417. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR: *Jan.* 21, 1774.

I HAVE returned those letters of Gray[1] to your friend, and earnestly beg as well as consent myself, that they should be printed. I should never forgive myself their being suppressed, as they will do him so much honour, and you have perfectly satisfied me that the lady[2] in question cannot be affected by them, which was my whole concern. I beg you will excuse all the trouble I have given you, but my mind was in such violent agitation about my nephew, that every object came magnified to my eyes; and my dread of doing wrong, when it is so difficult to do right in the variety of relations in which I stand, made me fearful that even so innocent a thing as Gray's letters might hurt a person of whom I have no cause to complain; but I will say no more, than that I approve your reasons for omitting the Epitaph on West, and the Author of it, and that I wish it may not

[1] Meaning, of course, the Postscript to the 'Heroic Epistle.'—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] The Duchess of Gloucester.—CUNNINGHAM

1418. TO H. R. H. THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.[1]

MADAM: *Jan.* 27, 1774.

THE most proper mark of respect that I can show to the Duke or to your Royal Highness on a subject of such momentous importance, is to use as few words as possible. I am not wise enough to advise, much less to decide upon it; nor do I know a man in England who I think could advise the Duke upon it with good effect. All I can do is to suggest what comes into my mind on the most intense thought and coolest reflection, submitting my sentiments, with the utmost deference, to his Royal Highness's judgment.

No man living has a higher opinion of the Duke of Richmond's unequalled honour and integrity than I have. I respect his spirit and abilities, and am as sure as I can be of anything that he is incapable of an unworthy action. Still I should not recommend him for the mover, if the question is resolved upon. The D. of K[ ] is particularly unwelcome to his Majesty; and the measure will be thought the more hostile if proposed by his Grace.

The question itself seems to me most unlikely of success. The Ministers will plead that when the King, however necessitous, does not ask for an increase of income, from the present distressed situation of the country, it cannot be reasonable to augment the revenue of his brothers. An increase of the King's own revenue might be supposed to include the charge of his own children; but

Mr. Gray's,[2] which I have had the hardiesse to complete by the addition of two or three stanzas. I mean to print it among some additional notes at the end of his Poems. If it serves, as I think it will, to elucidate his design, I shall not care how much it proves my lyrical inferiority; but more of this, when I send you the Ode, of which I mean to print a few copies, for the sake of obtaining your judgment and that of a few other friends, before I determine whether to insert it in the book or not. I shall hope to hear from you soon, and let me beg you to remember to direct to me at York, for you was always forgetful in points of this sort even when you had not so good, or rather so bad a cause to be forgetful. I hope I need not say how cordially I wish your mind to be more at ease, nor with what sincerity I am, dear Sir,

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

W. MASON.

[1] Walpole's own niece, the Lady Waldegrave of preceding letters.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Called by Mason 'Ode on Vicissitude,' and completed by him.—CUNNINGHAM.

an addition to that of his brothers' would not lessen the burthen of his own issue; and it would infallibly be urged that so numerous a progeny as his Majesty's, makes it imprudent to establish a precedent of such large revenues for each Prince of the Royal Family.

In any case, so great is the power of the Crown, and so infamous the servility of Parliament, that there cannot be the shadow of hope that an increase could be obtained for the two Royal Dukes against the King's inclination.

But a question moved and lost, as undoubtedly this would be, could only make His Royal Highness's case worse, if possible, than it is at present. His Royal Highness's father [Frederick, Prince of Wales], though heir-apparent to an old King, could not obtain an increase of income when parties ran high, and were almost equally divided. His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester, can hold out neither hopes nor rewards, and, in the very low ebb of opposition, would obtain scarce any support. When so few pay common respect by waiting on him, though not discountenanced for it, would they vote for him? no, not all that now pay their duty to him.

The question moved and lost, would change the state of the case to His Royal Highness's disadvantage. His treatment may now be thought hard. When he should have had recourse to opposition, which a parliamentary application would be called, the courtiers would term it an hostile measure, and thus claim a sanction for their servility, by affecting to support offended majesty.

The King himself would then too plead that he only acted by the opinion of Parliament, who did not think it reasonable to increase the income of the two Princes. And the most moderate Ministers, if any such there are, who may have wished a reconciliation between the King and his brothers, will then oppose it, as concluding that, by voting against them, they have made the two Royal Dukes their personal enemies.

Thus every door to a reconciliation in the Royal Family would be shut, and no advantage gained. On the contrary, His Royal Highness would only let the world know how few friends stand by him. When so few even of the Opposition wait on him, I doubt whether they would be heartier friends to his interest.

These seem to me insurmountable difficulties. It is still more arduous for me to chalk out an alternative.

I presumed to tell your Royal Highness, Madam, when you first mentioned this great point to me, that I thought the first step in

wisdom to be taken, was to engage the favour of mankind to the Duke's cause by showing he had done everything rather than act in what might be called a hostile manner. His Royal Highness will, I flatter myself, forgive me if I use even an improper term. Will it be too free-spoken in so important a moment to say, that previous to an application to Parliament, which should in prudence be the last resort, I would recommend even that application, if the Duke could show he had tried every method of softening his Majesty's displeasure? Nobody knows so well as His Royal Highness how to mix dignity with propriety. Could not His Royal Highness, Madam, blend those two in a representation of his youthful error, of his concern for having afflicted an affectionate brother and king, of tenderness for a wife, and a sweet little innocent princess, calling on his Majesty's piety for forgiveness, and by touching his heart on his own conjugal and parental affections; and, above all, by stating his own anxious cares on the incertitude of the fate of persons so dear to him as your Royal Highness and the infant princess, his daughter? These, Madam, are noble motives, and would justify a tender and fraternal application to his Majesty's heart, and would distress it far differently from a question in Parliament. They would engage the compassion of the disinterested world, and in the last resort would corroborate in the strongest manner all arguments in Parliament, where it would certainly be asked if his Royal Highness had used any intercession with the King, his brother. When the Duke had tried all other methods in vain, such application could not be condemned; and the preference of all softer methods first would redound to His Royal Highness's honour.

Having said thus much, Madam, I think my conscience and duty oblige me to add, that I think it indispensably incumbent on those who have the honour to be related to your Royal Highness, to give you no advice but such as may tend to repair the breaches which the Duke's tenderness for you has occasioned in the Royal Family. The good of his Royal Highness calls on you and on us to consult his welfare in the first instance. You have always told me how desirous you are of sacrificing yourself for him. I know the uprightness of your heart, Madam, and I know you spoke truth. Advise him to whatever is most for his benefit and credit. Do your duty by him, and trust to a just God for your reward. In the presence of that God I have given you the best advice in my power. I am sure I have not disobliged you by my freedom: I hope I have not offended his Royal Highness, but I declare on my conscience

and honour, that I know not what better advice to give, and sign it with my name, as the firm opinion of, Madam, your Royal Highness's

Most faithful and devoted humble servant.

1419. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 29, 1774.

You must excuse my silence, Madam, which is not, nor can be forgetfulness. While Lord Ossory was in town, I knew you could not want letters. Since he went, I have not had an instant's time; and though I write now, instead of dining, I have not a tittle to tell you that can entertain you, unless you will allow yourself to be diverted with the confusion of a methodist, as I am, who hate those knaves. So does King George, who has ordered the pure, precise Dr. Dodd to be struck off the list of his chaplains, not for gallantry with a magdalen,[1] as you would expect, but for offering a thumping bribe to my Lord Chancellor [Bathurst] for the fat living of St. George's [Hanover Square]. It is droll that a young comely divine should have fallen into the sin, not of Mary the Penitent, nor of her host, Simon the Pharisee, but of Simon Magus, the founder of Simony. Perhaps, as the Doctor married Lord Sandwich's mistress, he had had enough of *des filles repenties*.

A parcel of Warwickshire colliers alarmed the Court yesterday, and drew a great crowd round St. James's, but it was only a tribute to their Sovereign from their mines. I hope no wicked ballad-monger will ridicule the loyalty of those poor men, and paraphrase the ancient song of 'Old King Cole,' who called for his fiddlers three, and there was fiddle faddle and twice fiddle faddle, &c.

I ought to be in great spirits to-day, if I knew where to find them; but they have been so long sunk under troubles, I have so many still, and my nerves are so shattered, that I do not know how to be so happy as I ought to be, when I can say with truth, that I do believe my nephew perfectly in his senses. He owns he thinks his disorder the greatest blessing of his life; that he is convinced all that has been done is right; that it is what he wished done, but could not undertake; and that he is determined to pursue the plan I have chalked out for him. You may judge, Madam, how very

[1] Dr. Dodd was Chaplain to the Magdalen Hospital, in London.—Cunningham.

kind I think this treatment, and how much I feel myself obliged to him. I am to see him to-morrow, and have such a confusion of sensations that I dread the moment, though it is so delicious. Nay, I tremble more than ever lest he should relapse; for now my tenderness is interested in his health, which is still warmer than compassion. Nor am I yet out of this, or twenty other labyrinths! —but I must hold my tongue and drink the cup in silence.

Our lord and I talked much on a subject, that is much at my heart, though my heart is so full. The outward and visible signs are very promising: other prognostics are not so favourable. A deep silence is observed even on what everybody else talks of—the late rupture. I sounded Lady P., who had not heard even of that; which confirms what I have told you, that *two persons* will not so much as mention anything that can lead to the subject. It was a curious scene on Wednesday night, when all the parties met at Lady Charlotte's; the rejected lover played at quinze with the Duchess; but what had happened and what I hope will happen, was not so well disguised by the rest of the young actors and actresses. I do not think any public decision will be taken soon; and I do not doubt but the interval will be employed to defeat it. Still I have nothing to judge by, but these observations; for if everything was settled, not a word the more would be said. For you know, Madam, discretion is like the bird that hides its head, and fancies it is not seen; a remark that comforts us, the indiscreet, prodigiously. The language of art is just as well understood as that of frankness: nay, even its silence is talkative, that is, intelligible. Cunning does not make dupes half so often as it is itself the dupe of good-breeding. It would be ill-bred to tell people that one sees through them; and therefore they flatter themselves that they are not seen through: but all this is common-place, and I had better bid you adieu, Madam, *en attendant notre parenté.*

1420. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Feb. 2, 1774.

I KNOW little of public affairs, nor trouble myself with them but as news; and the only article in my letters which could excite particular curiosity, is very rarely there, and of which I believe *I* know less than anybody. I never was a favourite in a certain place,[1]

[1] Gloucester House.—WALPOLE.

and am now particularly ill there for having spoken my mind with more freedom than was welcome; but I shall die with the best legacy my father left me, his *Fari quæ sentiat*—an impertinent motto, when the *fari* is unnecessary.

Your Scotch Princess,[1] I doubt, is really mad. Does not she put you in mind of your friend Lord Fane,[2] who kept his bed six weeks, because the Duke of Newcastle, in one of his letters, forgot to sign himself your *very* humble servant, as usual, and only put "your humble servant?" These follies would have done very well, when folks fancied *their* stars did everything, and had good and bad demons; but *toute* demon as the Empress-Queen is, and womanish too, I don't believe that, like Juno, she persecutes the pious Æneas in every voyage and peregrination. Then, what an impertinent quarrel that with Lord Huntingdon![3] One sees indeed how peevish and persecuting her Ladyship would be, if she were Empress or Queen; but it is more ridiculous to proscribe Princes and Princesses, when one is nobody one's self. When the Sophi of Persia has dined, a herald gives leave to all other monarchs to go to dinner; but if a merchant's widow at Ispahan was to give the same permission to her Sovereign, she would be shut up in a madhouse, though she were to insist she had been married to Kouli Khan. I really wish you were well rid of her: cannot you persuade her to go to Rome, where there is a mock court that has nothing better to do than to quarrel about a mock etiquette?

We have no news public or private; but there is an ostrich-egg laid in America, where the Bostonians have canted three hundred chests of tea into the ocean, for they will not drink tea with our Parliament. My understanding is so narrow, and was confined so long to the little meridian of England, that at this late hour of life it cannot extend itself to such huge objects as East and West Indies, though everybody else is acquainted with those continents as well as with the map of Great Britain. Lord Chatham talked of conquering America in Germany; I believe England will be conquered some day or other in New England or Bengal. I think I have heard of such a form in law, as such an one of the parish of St. Martin's-in-

[1] Lady Mary Coke.—WALPOLE.

[2] Charles, last Viscount Fane, Minister at Florence.—WALPOLE.

[3] Francis, Earl of Huntingdon. Lady Mary Coke quarrelled with him for waiting on the Duchess of Cumberland in Italy. Lady Mary Coke tried to persuade people that she had been contracted to the Duke of York, and signed her letters, "Marye," part of the *y* signifying *e* or not, as was necessary.—WALPOLE.

the-Fields in Asia: St. Martin's parish literally reaches now to the other end of the globe, and we may be undone a twelvemonth before we hear a word of the matter—which is not convenient, and a little drawback on being masters of dominions a thousand times bigger than ourselves. Well! I suppose, some time or other, some learned Jesuit Needham will find out that Indostan was peopled by a colony from Cripplegate or St. Mary Axe, which will compensate for a thousand misfortunes.

You see, my dear Sir, I forget my troubles the moment they are at an end. Every year's events are stale by the next. One's cares, once at an end, are but old accidents, and to be flung by, like an old almanac. Politicians live by the future; I care only about the present; and the present being very calm, is worth enjoying. Adieu!

1421. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Feb. 12, 1774.

I MUST seem extremely culpable to your Ladyship for not answering your very kind letter the instant I received it; but it has been absolutely impossible. Though I have given up my trust [for his nephew], I have had many things to settle before I was quite quit of it. I have been in arrears for visits, had neglected my own affairs, and have so many other duties and avocations that I have not a moment's leisure. I stayed at home this morning on purpose to write this and two other letters, but so many people have come in, that it is almost three, and I have only begun, as you see, Madam. I am quite well again, and think myself the happiest being alive, with having got so fortunately, in spite of all my ignorance and incapacity, through my dismal business, and with seeing it at an end. I should, as I told you before, be in great spirits, if I knew where to find them; but my mind has been tormented and oppressed, my nerves are affected, and the impressions remain, though the cause is removed. I feel what is passed, and tremble lest it should return. In short, I sometimes think of going abroad, to vary the scene, recover my health, and avoid a relapse, for so Lord Orford's would be to me, unless I can decline the charge, as I am determined to do if I possibly can. I should not say so much on myself, were it not an excuse to Lady Anne [Fitzpatrick], as well as to your Ladyship; but how write a proper letter to her, or defend myself from the accusation of wit, unless

by proving how very dull I am! Oh! would I were capable of inventing stories of owls!

I am rejoiced Lord Ossory is coming, and overjoyed that there is a prospect of your both passing some time here. As he will not be with you when you receive this, I shall take the liberty of hinting at a little selfishness, that appears in your purloining *him* from the world, because *you* are determined to quarrel with it.

His acquiescence gives the *pas* to his virtues over yours, and you will not be the perfect wife, in my eyes, till you give up those of a shepherdess.

The accounts of Lady Holland are most cruel and melancholy. I have not yet been able to go to Holland House; partly from my disorder and business; still more from not having spirits to bear the sight. But I will gather resolution, and perhaps she will not see me.

I know not a syllable of news. There is some political, but I care not about it, nor would it entertain your Ladyship. It relates to a quarrel between the Speaker and the Printer; and about Mr. Grenville's bill for elections.[1] One must be deep in politics to be amused with such points.

The History of Charles Fox and Mrs. Grieve is published in very wretched verse, but curious for being authentic. There is a 'Post-script' too to the 'Heroic Epistle,' with some excellent lines, but inferior to the first, as second parts generally are.

I have again been interrupted; it is four o'clock, and I am not dressed; but I need not apologise for concluding such a letter. I am worn out; and, next to being a man of business, I find the worst thing in the world is to be a decayed one.

1422. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 14, 1774.

I AM most impatient for your Lyric section and the completion of the Ode. Nay, I am glad to have lost so much of school-boy and school-master, as to be charmed with the Fragment, though Dr. Barnard frowns on it. Pray remember, however, that when you

[1] The Grenville Act was made perpetual in this Session by 250 to 122. The disposition of the nation was so strong in favour of this bill, that very few who voted against it could venture to show themselves at a general election. It has been repealed in our own times with almost as general approbation.—R. VERNON SMITH.

have so much piety for Mr. Gray's remains, you are unpardonable in leaving your own works imperfect. I trust, as you will now enjoy your own garden in summer, and will have finished the life by your return from York, that you will perfect your 'Essay on Modern Gardening:' *you have given* a whole year to your friend and are in debt to the public.

My troubles are at an end, my nephew is as well as ever *He* was, and is gone into the country either to complete his own ruin and his family's, or to relapse. I shall feel the former, I dread the latter; but I must decline the charge a second time. It half killed me, and would entirely have ruined my health. Indeed it has hurt me so much, that though my mind has recovered its tranquillity I cannot yet shake off the impressions and recall my spirits. Six months of gout and nine of stewardship and fears were too much for my time of life and want of strength. The villany too that I have seen has shocked me; and memory predominates over cheerfulness. My inclination will certainly carry me this summer into Yorkshire, if dread of my biennial gout does not restrain me. Sometimes, I have a mind to go to a warmer climate; but either at Aston or at Strawberry will insist on our meeting before winter. What signifies a neighbour[1] you do not wish to see? Are our enemies to deprive us of our best satisfaction—seeing our friends? I will presume to say you cannot have a warmer or more sincere one than myself, who never call myself so when I do not feel myself so, and who have few pleasures left but that of saying what I think. You are too wise and too good not to despise the dirtiness of fools, or to regret a man, who came to years of discretion before he was past his childhood, and is superannuated before he is come to his understanding. He is decaying fast, and will soon exist but in his epitaph, like those poor Knights of Windsor who are recorded on their gravestones for their loyalty to Charles I.

The House of Lords is busy on the question of Literary Property, a question that lies between the integrity of Scotch authors and English booksellers. The other House has got into a new scrape with the City and printers, which I suppose will end to the detriment of the press. The Ministers have a much tougher business on their hand, in which even their factotum the Parliament may not be able to ensure success—I mean the rupture with America. If all the black slaves were in rebellion, I should have no doubt in choosing

[1] Alluding to Lord Holdernesse.—CUNNINGHAM.

my side, but I scarce wish perfect freedom to merchants who are the bloodiest of all tyrants. I should think the souls of the Africans would sit heavy on the swords of the Americans.

We are still expecting the Works of Lord Chesterfield and Lord Lyttelton—on my part with no manner of impatience; one was an ape of the French, the other of the Greeks, and I like neither secondhand pertness nor solemnity. There is published a 'Postscript' to the 'Heroic Epistle' certainly by the same author, as is evident by some charming lines, but inferior to the former as second parts are apt to be. The History of Charles Fox and Mrs. Grieve is come out too in rhyme, wretchedly done but minutely true. I think I have told you all I know, and more than you will care whether you know or not. It is an insipid age. Even the Maccaronis degenerate: they have lost all their money and credit, and ruin nobody but their tailors. Adieu.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, March* 3, 1774.

I COULD not with convenience get the Ode I mentioned to you printed before, as I was not come to the place in the Memoirs where the fragment is inserted. When that sheet was worked off I gave the printer my additions to print a dozen copies before the Roman types were broken up. One of these copies I send you, and if you and a few other friends think that what I have added may serve to elucidate his general idea, I shall reprint it and publish it, not among his Odes, no not even in the Memoirs, but only among some additional notes which I mean to put at the end of his Poems. Thrown in such a place, perhaps, I may escape censure for having had the vanity to make such an attempt.

We see nothing here but newspapers. If I send for a new pamphlet it is above a fortnight before it arrives. This was the case with the Heroic Postscript which you mentioned in your last. But you did not tell me that I had the honour of being placed in the same line with Dr. Goldsmith: if you had, I should hardly have sent for it. However, I am more contented with my company, than Garrick will be with his. I think much the same about the piece itself as you do, and as there is certainly less comic humour in it than in the former, I should think neither its reputation nor its sale would be so great; but here I find from the last paper, Ministry steps in as usual, and by the voice of Col. Onslow stamps the reputation it might want upon it, and hereby enhances Almon's profit. Were it not for this, I'll be bound to say not three persons in York would have read it; now it will spread through the county.

You gave me in your last (expressed in a line and a half) all the sense that has or can be spoken on the subject of Literary Property. But much more may be said, and I hope you will say it on the result of the debate. I think Lord Mansfield has finessed the matter far beyond all his former finesses. His silence—the palinodia of my Lord Chancellor—all, all are equally admirable. I must insist on another paragraph from you on this interesting subject.

I heartily rejoice that your family concerns are at least actively at an end, passively your heart will never suffer them to be, and perhaps it ought not. But I beg and entreat that same heart not to be too solicitous in future, for the sake of itself and for the sake of its friends, amongst which number (as it lately permitted me to do) I have both the pleasure and the honour to rank, dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

W. MASON.

1423. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Feb. 19, 1774.

I WILL say no more, Madam, on the subject of our last letters, for one reason that is worth all others. In one word, I leave that subject to your own reason, and I cannot trust it in better hands. You will do whatever is most proper, I am sure; all I presumed was to represent to you what I feared your own feelings might very naturally intercept; the only excuse for ever presuming to give advice.

Sensible people know all that can be said to them; at least, as well as their counsellors; but it is not always that they admit their own reason into the Cabinet. It is only a disgraced minister to a dead king, that plagues the successor with repeated remonstrances. I have no such opinion of my own wisdom, and am always glad to give up my place, and relapse into my own idleness. At present, I could tell you nothing but what Lord Ossory has brought you.

I saw him but one minute, which is not extraordinary, as the little time he passes in town cannot allow him leisure to sit with one that is out of the round of pleasure, and whose amusements even do not extend to politics or diversions. I am a little afraid that I shall not be here when you come yourself. I am to go either to-morrow se'nnight or to-morrow fortnight, with Lord Orford, to Houghton, a very unpleasant journey,—but I cannot decline it; nor would it become one that preaches to others to dispense with his own duty, which I have unluckily, though late, made my rule. You will smile, Madam, at the word *unluckily*, but it is peculiarly so to me. I came into the world when all my contemporaries were wise young men and hopeful senators. They had been bred at Leyden and Geneva, and it was a charm to behold such a promising generation! I only was a reprobate, and used to say and do whatever came into my head; I used to shock my Lord Hartington, and Lord Coke, and Lord Hillsborough, and Lord Barrington, and had more pleasure in George Selwyn's company, than in sucking wisdom at the feet of those Gamaliels, Mr. Pelham and the sage Duke of Newcastle. In my latter days I have changed my system, and have taken into keeping, that old battered abandoned haradan, Common Sense—and still am in the wrong, and out of the fashion. If I went to Almack's and decked out my wrinkles in pink and green, like Lord Har-

rington, I might still be in vogue; or if I paid nobody, and went drunk to bed every morning at six, I might expect to be called out of bed by two in the afternoon to save the nation, and govern the House of Lords by two or three sentences as profound and short as the Proverbs of Solomon. Well! I must dress and dine and go to the comedy of 'The Man of Business.'[1] As a proof of my incapacity, I read it this morning, and it is so full of modern lore, of rencounters and I know not what, that I scarce comprehended a syllable. No, I shall never be fit for anything as long as I live. A miscarriage I was born and shall die, without any merit but that of being

Your Ladyship's most attached.

1424. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 23, 1774.

I HAVE taken care not to be too sanguine about the continuation of my nephew's recovery. I have convinced him that I can greatly raise his estate, and he has sent for me to go with him to Houghton. I shall add this codicil to all I have done, and then shall desire to depart in peace. I again see that my family might be saved; but this is a vision which the first warm weather may disperse! and though visions are amusing, I know their texture too well to sigh at their evanition. With what joy I went to Strawberry Hill the other day alone, where I had not been in two months! How my pictures and books and I embraced after so long a separation! What a knave or fool must Charles V. have been to repent of having done with knaves and fools! I have reigned eight months, and have had the gout as he had, but know a little better than he did how to value health and liberty. But, though so much wiser than Charles V., I have not quite the sagacity of Solomon, who pronounced everything vanity and vexation of spirit. I have finished my temple, and enjoy it. I delight in my trees and shrubs, though I don't know why some are tall, and some short; and learned doctors divert me, though they cannot solve my doubts. Our Sanhedrim entertained me last week, as I am no longer a member. They were grievously affronted in the person of their prolocutor; and, no doubt, by the instigation of the wicked one—at least it is certain

[1] A Comedy, by Colman, produced at Covent Garden, 31st January, 1774.—CUNNINGHAM.

that the agents were *devils*. In short, the Press, which exceeds even the Day of Judgment, for it brings to light everybody's faults, and a good deal more, fell upon the Speaker of the House of Commons: he complained: the printer was taken up, and accused the Reverend Parson Horne as the author. The House concluded that the divine would shelter himself in the City, and that the magistrates there would protect him—no such thing; he came to the bar, acted respect, denied the charge—nay, artfully reduced them to this dilemma: Was the printer's deposition the accusation or the evidence? whichever it was, the counterpart would be wanted. The janissaries of the law, who can tie knots more easily than loosen them, were at a nonplus, though they said a great deal. Horne burst out into a laugh. They were forced to vote they would get more evidence; and sent for the printer's devils, who appeared the next day, but still to no purpose. None of them knew a syllable, as they hoped to be saved, of Horne being the author. Well! what to do? Why, nothing. Horne was dismissed, and the printer remains in custody. The majesty of the Senate is a little singed.

Well; but I must do justice: the press has done some justice. There is just published a very good dialogue between three persons of some note—namely, the partitioners of Poland. There is a great deal of wit and just satire in this piece; but though the press can pass sentence, I doubt it cannot see it executed. I do not know but part of it may be put in force. The rebellion in Russia still exists, which looks a little serious. How the Poles must pray that it may prosper! The King of Prussia is so thorough-paced a villain, that I should not be surprised if he had set it on foot. I am sure he will support it, if he can see his interest in it. How happy would it be to have those three monsters punished by each other!

I am heartily glad you are rid of the posthumous Duchess [Lady Mary Coke], who thinks herself the object at which all the darts of one of those furies are aimed. She is got to Turin, and will be at home in about two months. Seriously, I apprehend that she is literally mad. Her late visions pass pride and folly. The world here is exceedingly disposed to laugh at her; and by a letter that is already come from her to Princess Amelia, she does not at all mean to keep her imaginary persecutions secret. Indeed, indeed, my dear Sir, I have long told you that we are all mad, and everything one hears proves it. Nay, don't you find every English man or woman who arrives at Florence out of their senses? I am persuaded that if you were not discretion itself, your letters would be as full of

extravagant events as mine are. What think you of that pompous piece of effrontery and imposture, the Duchess of Kingston? Is there common sense in her ostentation and grief, and train of black crape and band of music? I beg you would not be silent on that chapter; it is as comic a scene as that of the Countess Trifaldine in Don Quixote; and though she is the high and mighty Princess, at least she does not yet pretend to be a Royal one.

I have had mighty civil despatches from my sister-in-law [the Countess of Orford]. She desires the continuation of our correspondence, which I shall now and then obey. I may be obliged to renew it; and, therefore, it is best to keep it up. I have no resentment to her. I wish to keep her and her son on good terms. I have done all I can to persuade him to write to her, and he promises it. Adieu!

P.S.—24th. The famous Charles Fox was this morning turned out of his place of First Lord of the Treasury for great flippancies in the House towards Lord North. His parts will now have a full opportunity of showing whether they can balance his character, or whether patriotism can whitewash it.[1] The Queen was brought to bed this evening of another prince.[2]

Lady Bute desires me to tell you that Mrs. Anne Pitt is going to Pisa, and that I would recommend her to you. I should do that on my own account, as I am very intimate with her. You know she is Lord Chatham's sister, as well as his very image; but you must take care not to make your court to her on that head, as they are no dear friends. She has excellent parts, a great deal of wit, and not so sweet a temper as to contradict the likeness of her features. She has at times been absolutely *English*,[3] but not in the present style of the fashion, and has much too good sense to exhibit any extraordinary scenes. She is extremely well-bred, and knows the world perfectly. In short, she will be much pleased with your attentions, and will please you in a very different way from the generality of our exports. I dread sending you any body that I have not known long, and some that I do; but there is no danger from Mrs. Pitt, who has always lived in the great world, and is not

[1] He is thinking of his father's happy description of Sir William Yonge:—"Nothing but Yonge's character could keep down his parts, and nothing but his parts support his character."—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] H. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Out of her senses. She died so some years after [1780].—WALPOLE.

of an age to play the fool—especially on a small theatre. She has not succeeded so well as she intended on a very large one;[1] but you may depend upon it, Tuscany will not tempt her. I will not answer but she may take liberties with *some*[2] that have been tempted by *great dutchies;* but you will have the prudence not to seem to hear what it is better not to answer.

1425. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, *Arlington Street, March* 19, 1774.

I ARRIVED here but four hours ago from Houghton, where I have been this fortnight with my nephew. I find your letter, your printed Ode, and messages from Mr. Stonhewer, to whom I have not yet had an instant's time to send, nor have, but to say one syllable to you, as I approve your additions exceedingly, and would not delay saying so; that, if my taste or judgment can have any weight, you may be determined to print what Gray might envy. I am fond of modesty even in the flower of authors, but not carried too far, as you do now, by degrading Gray to an Appendix, because you, though unworthy, will not sit by him in his Works. You have finished him as well as he himself, with all his love of polishing, could have done, and I think truly that yours have more harmony than some of his lines. I wonder at it, for I dislike the metre, which in the fourth line has a sudden sink, like a man with one leg shorter than the other; but I have not time for a word more. You shall have a longer letter in a post or two. Adieu.

Yours most devotedly,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1426. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR, *Strawberry Hill, March* 23, 1774.

I WROTE my last in a great hurry, and not much knowing what I said, being just lighted from my chaise after being a fortnight at Houghton with my nephew; where my head was filled with business, and my heart with anxiety and grief and twenty other passions, for (not to return to the subject) if he is recovered I doubt it will not be

[1] She was Privy Purse to the Princess Dowager, over whom she had expected much influence, but meddling too much, was disgraced.—WALPOLE.

[2] Duchess of Cumberland.—WALPOLE.

for a long season. He is neither temperate in his regimen nor conduct, and if I have chased away seven evil spirits, as many are ready to enter. In short, the rest of my life, I find, and they will shorten it, is to be spent in contests with lawyers, the worst sort of lawyers, attornies, stewards, farmers, mortgagees, and toad-eaters. I do not advance and cannot retreat. I wished to live only for my friends and myself; I must now, I find, live for my relations—or die for them. You are very kind in pitying, and advising me to consult my ease and health; but if you knew my whole story, and it was not too long, even for a series of letters like Clarissa's, you would encourage me to proceed. For I flatter myself that my duty is the incentive to my conduct, and you, whose life is blameless, would, I am sure, advise your friend to sacrifice his happiness at last to his family, and to the memory of a father to whom he owes everything. But no more on this, though it has, and does occupy my mind so much, that I am absolutely ignorant of the affairs of the world, and of all political and literary news, though the latter are the only comforts of the few moments I have to myself.

I began Mr. Bryant's—what shall I call it?—præ-existent 'History of the World,' but had not time to finish the first volume. It put me in mind of Prior's Madam, who

> To cut things came down to Adam.

There are two pages under the Radical Macar that will divert you; an absolute account of Μακαρωνες, though I dare to swear the good man never dreamt that he was writing the history of Almack's. I have just got Mr. Warton's '*Life* of Poetry,' and it seems delightfully full of things I love, but not a minute to begin it; nor Campbell's long-expected work on Commerce, which he told me, twenty years ago, should be the basis on which he meant to build his reputation. Lord Lyttelton and Lord Chesterfield are coming forth, and one must run them over in self-defence. Still I say to you, *O quando ego te aspiciam*—yes, *Te*, both you and your Gray! I am impatient for the remainder, though I would not have it hurried.

Mr. Stonhewer will have told you what I said on the print [of Gray]; but if he could make sense of it I shall wonder, for I was on both sides: for your print, as the more agreeable; for Wilson's picture as extremely like, though a likeness that shocks one. There are marks, evident marks, of its being painted after Gray's death. I would not hang it up in my house for the world. I think I am now come to know my own mind: it is to have prints of both; from

yours at the beginning to front his Juvenilia; from Wilson's, at or towards the end, as the exact representation of him in his last years of life. The delay will not signify, as your book is a lasting one—no matter if it comes out in the middle of summer. It does not depend for its sale on a full London: it will be sent for into the country, and will always continue to be sold. Were I to write any thing that I could hope to have minded, I would publish in summer. The first ball, duel, divorce, new prologue of Garrick, or debate in the House of Commons, makes everything forgotten in a minute in winter. Wedderburn's philippic on Franklin, that was cried up to the skies, Chief Justice de Grey's on Literary Property, Lord Sandwich's honourable behaviour to Miller the printer, are already at the bottom of Lethe. Mademoiselle Heinel dances to-morrow, and Wedderburn and Lord Sandwich will catch their deaths, if they wait in either of the Temples of Fame or Infamy in expectation of admirers.

I know not a word more than I told you, or you have heard, of the affair of Literary Property. Lord Mansfield's finesse, as you call it, was christened by its true names—pitiful and paltry. Poor Mrs. Macaulay has written a very bad pamphlet on the subject. It marks dejection and sickness. In truth, any body that has principles must feel. Half of the King's Opposition at least are hurrying to Court. Sir William Meredith has ridden thither on a white stick; Colonel Barré on the necks of the Bostonians, his old friends; Mr. Burke, who has a tolerable stake in St. Vincents, seems to think it worth all the rest of America. Still, I do not know how, an amazing bill of an amazing parent, has slipped through the ten thousand fingers of venality, and gives the Constitution some chance of rousing itself—I mean Grenville's bill for trying Elections. It passed as rapidly as if it had been for a repeal of Magna Charta, brought in by Mr. Cofferer Dyson. Well! it is one o'clock in the morning, and I must go to bed. I have passed one calm evening here alone, and have concluded it most agreeably by chatting with you. To-morrow I must return into the bustle; but I carry every where with me the melancholy impression of my life's tranquillity being at an end. I see no prospect of peace for me, whether my nephew lives, dies, relapses, or remains as he is at present. I love to be occupied, but in my own way, unobserved and unconnected. My joy is to read or write what I please: not letters of business, accounts or applications. But good night; I have tired you and myself: my sole excuse is, if you will take it for one, that I had other things to do that I should have

liked doing; but writing to you was the greatest pleasure, and according to my former habits I preferred what amused me best.

Yours ever,
H. W.

1427. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, March 28, 1774.

I HAVE just gone through a fortnight's experience of most of my nephew's characteristics. I have been with him at Houghton, and am returned full of sorrow, convinced, on one hand, that if he remains in what are called his senses, his conduct will not be more reasonable than formerly; and, on the other, expecting a relapse.

Your correspondent at Turin[1] has found so flattering a reception at that Court, that it has smoothed all the loyalty of her brow, and suspended hostilities against Vienna so far, that she has proclaimed an armistice, and sent orders to her ministers at home to observe a strict silence on her former despatches. I am glad you will be relieved from all our wandering Courts, except her Grace of Kingston's, which is so contemptible, that, were I in your place, I should be extremely determined to let it give me no trouble.

We are in profound tranquillity here. Even America gives us no pain—at least it makes little sensation, for the Opposition have not taken up the cause; in the first place, because the Opposition is very feeble; and, secondly, because it has a great mind to be less; that is, they are, many of the few, endeavouring to wriggle into Court by different doors. The general tone against the Bostonians is threats. It remains to be seen whether America will be as pliant as we say they must be. I don't pretend to guess, for I seldom guess right; but we could even afford to lose America. Every day gives us more East Indies. Advice has just come that we have taken Tanjore, and a General Smith has got 150,000*l.* for his own share. Spaniards are forced to dig in mines before they are the better for the gold of Potosi; we have nothing to do but to break a truce, and plunder a city, and we find the retty metal ready coined and brilliants ready cut and mounted. Nay, don't frown; depredation is authorised by act of Parliament, at least by the vote of the House of Commons that acquitted and applauded

[1] Lady Mary Coke.—WALPOLE.

Lord Clive. How much more just would that sentence of a barbarian ambassador be, if applied to our Parliament than to the Senate of Rome, that he thought he saw an assembly of kings: we sanctify such violences and iniquities, that one should think the House of Commons were composed of three hundred and sixty-five Empresses and Kings of Prussia.

The Duke of Devonshire marries Lady Georgiana Spencer; she is a lovely girl, natural, and full of grace; he, the first match in England.[1] Your old friend, Lord Pelham, is made Justice in Eyre. There are some other promotions of no moment to you, that you will read in the newspapers.

I don't know what to do with the letter you sent me. I have sent a servant all round the town and to the Opera House, but can get no tidings of a Scultore Capezzuoli,[2] you must send me a direction, or I shall never find him. Do his correspondents think that London would stand in the palm of one's hand, like Florence?

1428. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, April 6, 1774.

I LIKE to obey your ladyship in nothing so little as in talking of myself; and yet I must, as you inquire after *it;* and gratitude obliges me to thank you for so much goodness. I have been here these four days, have slept well, and have less pain in my breast, and fewer nerves. I am advised to go to Bath, which I will not do for the very reason I am advised to it, as I would do anything to avoid the gout or put it off, rather than seek it. In short, I shall try a good deal of this air, as long as it suits me; and if it does not, go somewhere to the sea-side, which has always been more serviceable than any remedy, and as it is my year for the gout, I wish to get a little strength to support it. By Lord Orford succeeding to the last long fit, I have never recovered it. There, Madam, if you was my apothecary, I could not have been more circumstantial. Look in the glass, and see if you deserve to be treated like a nurse; but you are so very kind to me, that I write to your heart, not to your face and

[1] The Duchess, "nursed in pomp and pleasure," whose beauty has been preserved to us by both Reynolds and Gainsborough. Coleridge in verse has commemorated her skill in song.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] An Italian, who modelled and cast the bas-relief of General Wolfe's monument in Westminster Abbey.—CUNNINGHAM.

person. If you were not to be in London, the spring advances so charmingly, I think I should scarce go thither. One is frightened with the inundation of breakfasts and balls that are coming on. Everybody is engaged to everybody for the next three weeks, and if one must hunt for a needle, I had rather look for it in a bottle of hay in the country than in a crowd. I don't want company here; Lord and Lady Strafford are at Twickenham, and the Meynells at your old residence. If I want literature or news, yonder is Mr. Cambridge; politics or places I do not want, or Lord and Lady North are at Bushy. At present I am immersed in Warton's 'History of Poetry,' and can listen to no news that don't begin thus:—

Herkeneth now, both old and zyng,
Ffor Marie love, that swete thyng,
Flow a werre bigan
Bitweene a god cristene kyng,
And an hethene heik lordyng,
Of Damas the Soudan.

If the Czarina takes Constantinople, I shall think it is the proper conclusion of the story, and only correct the MS. to "god *cristene Queen*."

Dr. Goldsmith is dead, and my cousin Mrs. Harris.[1] The owl hooted last night on the Round Tower, and I thought was going to tell me a story for Lady Anne, but had been reading Warton too, and only repeated these lines:—

Than shal you, doughter, aske the wyne,
With spises that be gode and fyne:
Gentyll pottes with genger grene
With dates and deynties you betweene.
Fortie torches, brenynge bright,
At your brydges to bring you lygth.
Into youre chambre they shall you brynge
Wyth much myrthe and more lykynge.
Your blankettes shalbe of fustyane,
Your shetes shalbe of cloths of rayne,
Your head shete shalbe of pery pyght,
With dyamonds set and rubys bryght.
When you are layd in bed so softe,
A cage of gold shal hange alofte,
With longe peper fayre burning,
And cloves that be swete smellyng,
Frankincense and olibanum,
That whan ye slepe, the taste may come,
And if ye no rest can take,
All nyght mynstrels for you shall wake.[2]

[1] Anne Conway. See vol. ii. p. 415, and vol. iii. p. 331.—Cunningham.

[2] He is not so apt as Chatterton, of whom he thought so little.—Cunningham.

Well, Madam, if Lady Anne [Fitzpatrick] does not like this promise as well as an Arabian tale, I will burn my books and give over *fairie*. What luxury to repose on fustian blankets and sheets made of the skins of reindeer! Rude and savage as we think our ancestors, you see they indulged in more delicacies than the Maccaronies do. The future Duchess of Devonshire will have nothing but tea and sack-whey, not gentle pots of ginger green; nor will her head lie soft on a bolster set with diamonds and rubies, unless Miss Loyd and Mrs. Howe hear of this sumptuous description, and insist on Lady Georgiana's having a still richer bolster,—or the *taste will never come*. Adieu! my goddess of health; I cannot be ill or low spirited when I am writing to you.

1429. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 7, 1774.

Well, I have read Mr. Warton's book; and shall I tell you what I think of it? I never saw so many entertaining particulars crowded together with so little entertainment and vivacity. The facts are overwhelmed by one another, as Johnson's sense is by words:[1] they are all equally strong. Mr. Warton has amassed all the parts and learning of four centuries, and all the impression that remains is, that those four ages had no parts or learning at all. There is not a gleam of poetry in their compositions between the Scalds and Chaucer: nay I question whether they took their metres for anything more than rules for writing prose. In short, it may be the genealogy of versification with all its intermarriages and anecdotes of the family; but Gray's and your plan might still be executed. I am sorry Mr. Warton has contracted such an affection for his materials, that he seems almost to think that not only Pope, but Dryden himself have added few beauties to Chaucer.

The republic of Parnassus has lost a member; Dr. Goldsmith is dead of a purple fever, and I think might have been saved if he had continued James's powder, which had had much effect, but his physician interposed. His numerous friends neglected him shamefully at last, as if they had no business with him when it was too

[1] "Oh for a thousand tongues, and every tongue
Like Johnson's, armed with words of six feet long."
Mason, Epistle to Shebbeare.
—Cunningham.

serious to laugh. He had lately written Epitaphs for them all,[1] some of which hurt, and perhaps made them not sorry that his own was the first necessary. The poor soul had sometimes parts, though never common sense.

I shall go to town to-morrow and send for my Lord Chesterfield's Letters, though I know all I wished to see is suppressed. The Stanhopes applied to the Chancellor for an injunction, and it was granted. At last his Lordship permitted the publication on two conditions, that I own were reasonable, though I am sorry for them. The first, that the family might expunge what passages they pleased: the second, that Mrs. Stanhope should give up to them, without reserving a copy, Lord Chesterfield's Portraits [Characters] of his contemporaries, which he had lent to his son, and re-demanded of the widow, who gave them up, but had copied them. He burnt the originals himself,[2] just before he died, on disgust with Sir John Dalrymple's book, a new crime in that sycophant's libel.

Campbell's book I have not looked into, and am told is very heavy. Thus I have given you an account of my reading as my confessor in literature. I know nothing else, and am happy to have time for thinking of my amusement.

Your old friend [Lord Holdernesse] passes by here very often airing, and I am told looks ghastly[3] and going. It has been so much expected, that his post of Governor was destined, I hear, to Lord Bristol, and his Cinque Ports I know were offered to Lord Germaine, for there seems to be a general comprehension, and nobody is to remain discontented, but those who see their reversions promised.

I don't ask about your own books, for I wish you to have a whole summer of readers to yourself, as I told you in my last. I do inquire when I shall see you, and hope it will be in the summer too, for in autumn I expect the gout, my biennial tyrant. If he is as severe as last time, he will be soon like the woman who killed her hen that laid golden eggs.

I forgot in my confession to say that I have gone through half of Mr. Bryant's first volume. Lord John has read both, and likes them, and thinks there is a great deal made out. I got far enough to see

[1] Meaning 'Retaliation.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Some are in print. The fullest collection is in Lord Mahon's edition of 'Lord Chesterfield's Letters,' 5 vols. 8vo.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] So Gray, sarcastically altering Mason's 'Dedicatory Sonnet to Lord Holdernesse,' turned "wonted smile" into "ghastly smile."—CUNNINGHAM.

that the Tower of Babel might have been finished, if you would allow the workmen to begin at the top and bottom at once; but this was not my reason for mentioning the book. If you have it or it is in your neighbourhood, pray in the radicals read the article of Macar. You will find that there was a happy people, a favourite name, who lived in an island and were called Μακαρωνες. Mr. Bryant is no joker, and I dare to swear never thought on our Maccaronies, when he was talking of Cushites and Ammonians. But I forgot that you are not as idle as I am, nor are bound to hear of every book I read. I can only say in excuse that when one is alone, one is apt to think of those one loves, and wishes to converse with them on common pursuits. Is not it natural too, to wish to engage them in a little conversation? One tells them news, and wants them to care for it, in hopes of an answer. In short, you have won my affection, and must sometimes be troubled with it; but you are at liberty to treat it coolly or kindly, as you please. The mass will remain, though you should not encourage me to send you papers full of it at a time. Adieu!

9th April.

I was too late for the post on Thursday, and have since got Lord Chesterfield's Letters, which, without being well entertained, I sat up reading last night till between one and two, and devoured above 140. To my great surprise they seem really written from the heart, not for the honour of his head, and in truth do no great honour to the last, nor show much feeling in the first, except in wishing for his son's fine gentlemanhood. He was sensible what a cub he had to work on, and whom two quartos of licking could not mould, for cub he remained to his death. The repetitions are endless and tiresome. The next volume, I see, promises more amusement, for in turning it over, I spied many political names. The more curious part of all is that one perceives by what infinite assiduity and attention his lordship's own great character was raised and supported; and yet in all that great character what was there worth remembering but his bon mots? His few fugitive pieces that remain show his genteel turn for songs and his wit: from politics he rather escaped well, than succeeded by them. In short, the diamond owed more to being brillianted and polished, and well set, than to any intrinsic worth or solidity.[1]

[1] 1774. Wrote an Introduction to, and a Parody of, Lord Chesterfield's three first Letters.—*Walpole, Short Notes,* i. lxxvii. For Walpole's opinion of Lord Chesterfield, see his 'Works,' vol. i., p. 535. This character is not in Park's Edition of the Royal and Noble Authors.—CUNNINGHAM.

1430. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 17, 1774.

You may say what you please, my dear Sir, but, yes you will be tired with the sight of my letters; and this perhaps will be still less welcome than any of its predecessors. They, poor souls, had no excuse for their gossiping. This is written more seriously, and from good will prepense. In one word, my admiration has been ripened into warm friendship; and I do not see why friendship should be debarred of the privilege of telling one's friend his merits, when ill-nature may so cheaply borrow its mask to reprove him for his faults. Mr. Stonhewer brought me your Section yesterday, before I received your letter; and do you know, I am exceedingly discontent with it? not for its faults, for there is not a single blemish, but for your honesty and rashness. What can provoke you to be so imprudent? or do you think I love you so little, as to enjoy your free spirit, and not tell you what a nest of hornets, nay of hyænas you are incensing! I do beseech you to repress your indignation and cancel the papers in question. They will enrage, and you will have a life of warfare to lead to your dying day. Martyrdom itself might be delightful, if good could spring from the drops of blood. In the present case what benefit could arise?—to yourself endless disquiet must be the consequence. Well, but if I cannot touch your own intrepidity, I know I can stagger it, when your friend's memory is at stake. In Gray's own letters there is enough to offend: your notes added will involve him in the quarrel; every silly story will be revived, and his ashes will be disturbed to vex you. You know my idea was that your work should consecrate his name. To ensure that end, nothing should be blended with it that might make your work a book of party and controversy. By raising enemies to it, you will defeat in part your own benevolent purpose of a charitable fund. When so numerous a host are banded against it, the sale will be clogged: reflect how many buyers you will exclude. At least as there is no loving kindness in my mercy, reserve the objectionable letters and your own notes to a future edition; nay, it will be policy. If the book appears without its sting, Gray's character will be established, and unimpeached. Hereafter let them decry him if they can. I will dwell no longer on the subject; your letter tells me you are not in haste. Our Mr. Stonhewer will write, and tell you that the *neighbouring inconvenience* will soon be removed one way, and my last that it is

likely to be removed every way. I hope to see you at Strawberry Hill on the first dislodgment, and then we shall have time to squabble on the several articles I object to.

I have a few other difficulties, not of much consequence. I would omit every passage that hints at the cause of his removal from Peterhouse. Don't you, or do you, know that that and other idle stories were printed in an absurd book called 'Lexiphanes!'[1] I would be as wary as the Church of Rome is before they canonize a saint. They wait till he has been dead an hundred years, that no old woman may exist to tell a tale of the frailty of his youth, as a beldame did when Charles Borromée was to be sainted. Now I descend to verbal criticism. In p. 234, line 17 of the note, there is an *He* that is obscure. It means Gray, but by the construction refers to Akenside. "He would tire of it as soon as *he* did." The second *he* should be *Mr. Gray*. In p. 241, note 1, Gray was not mistaken. Before the Duc de Choiseul was disgraced, I was privy to many abject solicitations made by Voltaire to both the Duke and Duchess for leave to go to Paris; but the Duke did not think it worth his while to quarrel with the clergy and parliament upon his account. The moment the Duke was out, Voltaire renewed the battery of flattery to the breast of the Duc d'Aiguillon, but as the first part of the transaction was communicated to me in confidence, I would not have it made public while the parties are living. His letters on that occasion are extant, and some time or other I suppose will appear.

In Algarotti's letter are two false printings: for *quan io porso* it should be *quanto io porrò*, or rather I believe *potro;* and for *sottescrivam*, read *sottoscrivermi.*

In defiance of my Lord Chesterfield, who holds it vulgar to laugh, and who says wit never makes one laugh, I declare I laughed aloud, though alone, when I read of the professor who died of turbot *and made a good end.* If this is not wit, I do not know what is. I am much more in doubt of his Lordship's wit, since I have finished his Letters. Half of the last volume has many pretty or prettyish ones, but sure no professor of wit ever sowed so little in two such ample fields! He seems to have been determined to indemnify himself for the falsehood and constraint of his whole life by owning what an impostor he had been. The work is a most proper book of laws for the generation in which it is published, and has reduced the folly and

[1] No; but in a work by the same writer (Archibald Campbell), entitled 'The Sale of Authors, a Dialogue in imitation of Lucian,' 1767. 'Lexiphanes' was written in ridicule of Dr. Johnson.—CUNNINGHAM.

worthlessness of the age to a regular system, in which nothing but the outside of the body and the superficies of the mind are considered. If a semblance of morality is recommended, it is to be painted and curled, and Hippolytus himself may keep a w——, provided she is married and a woman of quality. In short if the idea were not an old one, I would write on the back of this code, *The whole duty of man, adapted to the meanest capacities.*

If you like my telling you literary news, I will whenever I have any. I now have time to read and enjoy myself. Your observation on Mr. Warton's civility to Macpherson is very just. It is like protestants who in catholic countries bow to the sacrament, but do not kneel; and I do not doubt but both the priests and the Scot would burn the heretics if they could. I wish I could satisfy you about the parliament's intention on Literary Property, but as a Bill is ordered in, you will know more of the event before you think of publishing. I scarce know more of the parliament's transactions than what I read in the papers. When I was at Rome, I never pryed into the actions of the Senatore di Roma. All I know of our senate is, that it is held in the Temple of Concord.

I enquire so little after their transactions, that I did not hear your name had been mentioned on that Bill. I was told that a name of much less consequence, my own, was quoted by Mr. Wedderburn; I protest I did not ask whether in approbation or dislike, or to what end. Apropos, I did hear that the other day Lord North declaiming against the Opposition (I don't guess where he found them), and saying they meant nothing but pensions and places, turned to his right, and there sat Cornwall blushing up to the eyes; turning short from a crimson conscience, on the right sat Wedderburn, pale as death; come, there is some merit in crimson.

You ask about answers to books: in good sooth I never read such matters, nor can tell who does but their authors. At least I never heard of the one you mention, nor disturb the departed. I must now say a word about that insignificant personage myself. I will not quarrel with you about what you say of my wit. Whether I have it, or have had it, I neither know nor care. It was none of my doing; and even if I had it, I am guilty of never having improved it, and of putting it to very trifling uses. Whatever it was, it is gone with my spirits, or passed off with my youth, which I bear the loss of too with patience, though a better possession. But I am seriously hurt with those two words at the conclusion of your letter, *perfect respect.* Jesus! my dear Sir, to me, and from you, *perfect*

respect! on what grounds, on what title? What is there in me respectable? To have flung away so many advantages in so foolish a manner as I have done, is that respectable? to have done nothing in my life that is praiseworthy, not to have done as much good as I might; does this deserve respect from so good a man as you are? Have I turned even my ruling passion, that preservative I call it, pride to account? No; yet hear my sincere confession; I had rather be unknown, and have the pride of virtue, than be Shakespeare, which is all I can say of mortal wit. Nay, I would rather accept that pride of virtue preferably to all earthly blessings, for its own comfortable insolence, though I were sure to be annihilated the moment I die; so far am I from thinking with the saint, that suffering virtue without a future reward, would of all conditions be the most miserable. There are none, or few real evils, but pain and guilt: the dignity of virtue makes everything else a trifle, or very tolerable. Penury itself may flatter one, for it may be inflicted on a man for his virtue, by that paltry thing ermine and velvet, a king. Pray, therefore, never respect me any more, till my virtues have made me a beggar. I am not melancholy, nor going to write *divine poems*.[1] I have a more manly resolution, which is to mend myself as much as I can, and not let my age be as absurd as my youth. I want to respect myself, the person in the world whose approbation I desire most. The next title I aspire to, but not till that person is content with me, is that of being your

Sincere friend,

H. W.

P.S. You will be diverted to hear that a man who thought of nothing so much as the purity of his language, I mean Lord Chesterfield, says, "you and *me* shall not be well together," and this not once, but on every such occasion. A friend of mine says, it was certainly to avoid that female inaccuracy of *they don't mind you and I*, and yet the latter is the least bad of the two. He says too, Lord Chesterfield does, that for forty years of his life he never used a word without stopping a moment to think if he could not find a better. How agreeably he passed his time![2]

[1] Alluding to Waller's employment when very old.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *York, April* 23, 1774.

I HAVE cried *peccavi* in so many and long periphrases to Stonhewer and Dr. Hurd, that I have no more words left to express my contrition. I will, therefore, only say

1431. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 1, 1774.

THE period of time, rather than anything I have to say, brings you my letter. Political events are so much the materials of a distant correspondence, that I don't know how ours would have

to you, that only have patience with me and I will cancel every syllable that can offend either Mr. Macpherson, or the most itchy Highlander that ever came to a register office in search of *perfarment*. I now know and feel my own old English nothingness, and I never speak to my Scotch printer's Scotch devil without rising from my writing-desk and desiring him to be seated. But as I have said before, you must have patience with me, and having stopped the press you must suffer me to let it remain quiet for some months, before I open it again with my fifth Section. In the meanwhile be assured I will not be idle, but will try to improve myself under the tuition of that great master of urbanity, my Lord Chesterfield, who being dead yet speaketh. I will prove by my own example that his work, which Mrs. Eugenia [Stanhope] says will improve the youth, shall also improve the grown gentlemen of these kingdoms. I have already under his tuition begun to treat my conscience as Jack and Martin, in the 'Tale of a Tub,' did their old coats. The first pluck I gave was at the tag of my sincerity. I pulled hard and found the operation painful; nay, it still hangs by two or three strong threads, but I hope in time to get fairly quit of it. I will next have a bout with my simplicity. This tag I know will occasion a great rent, but I will piece it up with any French frippery that comes to hand. When this is over, there will remain only a little religion and morality, which will drop of themselves; indeed they are so sewed to the first tag that if one comes fairly off, the two others will come with it; and so when all of them are detached, I will devoutly consume them in one great sacrifice to the Graces. If I succeed in this operation, what have you not to expect from me, when I come in my regenerated state to visit you in your gothic castle of Strawberry. I on my part expect you will think of no personages of less *monde* fit to invite to our *partie quarré* than Lord Carlisle and Mr. James.[1] The former we would hope cannot offend me by laughing, even if the latter should be guilty of a bon mot. Take care, however, that I never see anything like *mauvaise honte*, for I die at the sight of it. Apropos to *mauvaise honte*, pray does not the last page of your last letter smell terribly of its asafœtida? You seem ashamed that I should respect you, and give this fine reason for it, that you do not deserve respect. *Homme sauvage et vulgaire!* who ever had respect that deserved it, who ever was without it that did not deserve it? Was I writing in my old character I should say that a penitent of all other persons deserved the most respect, but penitence is not now in my catechism. Besides this I have another quarrel with you. You call me somewhere or other "so good a man." *Mon Dieu! Bon!* the phrase is barbarous, it is now never applied except in the feminine to a *gouvernante*. In your next I suppose you will call me *ma bonne*, and make a Mademoiselle Kromm of me. These strictures, my dear Sir, I hope will have a good effect upon you, and make the style of your next a little more *décrotté*. In the meanwhile you must own that the friend of Madame du Deffand has lived to a fine time, when he sees himself the pupil (in point of *politesse*) of a Yorkshire parson. One word of serious and I have done. I am much more sorry to find you object to the manner I have treated Gray's removal to Pembroke, than for other matters which you think of more consequence. I had

[1] Haughton James, a West India proprietor and a man of fashion; formed two libraries; sold the first to Robert Heathcote, Esq., and the second to Mr. Thomas Payne the bookseller.—MITFORD.

crept on for so many years, if the last thirty had been as barren as the present one. There is indeed a great business in agitation, and has been for some time; but, without the thorough-bass of Opposition, it makes no echo out of Parliament. Its parliamentary name is *Regulations for Boston*. Its essence, the question of sovereignty over America. Shall I tell you in one word my opinion? If the Bostonians resist, the dispute will possibly be determined in favour of the Crown by force. If they temporise or submit, waiting for a more favourable moment, and preparing for it, the wound, skinned over, will break out hereafter with more violence—not that I lay any stress on my own conjectures. People collect their guesses from what they have read, heard, or seen; but times are unlike; and a single man[1] can sometimes give a new colour to an age.

Would not one think that people die or marry only out of opposition too? There is not anything more new in private than in public life. One would think the summer began two months sooner than it used to do; yet the Parliament will probably sit late, in expectation of hearing how the rigour exercised on the Bostonians is received by them and the other colonies.

Lady Mary Coke is not yet arrived, nor was even got to Paris; at least, a letter I received thence yesterday does not mention her. She is expected at home some time in this month.

I have not yet been able to discover Cappezzuoli the sculptor, for whom you sent me a letter long ago. I have inquired at every statuary's in town to no purpose. Mr. Chute's servant, Martelli, is now upon the hunt for him; but his correspondent ought to know that London is a little bigger than Florence. It was directed to Capezzuoli, Scultore, à Londrà. One cannot find a needle in such a bottle of streets. London increases every day; I believe there will

read 'Lexiphanes' in its life-time; it has been dead long, and I hardly think what I say will revive it. In a life so void of events, how is it possible to omit this? would not the omission make the world believe him more wrong than he really was? I think they would supply the omission from 'Lexiphanes,' which would be the means of his resuscitation. But this and everything else shall be altered to all your minds if you give me time for it, but indeed and indeed I am at present heartily tired of the work itself, and if you knew the pains and the thought it has taken me to arrange the letters, in order to form that variety which I aimed at to make it read pleasantly, you would not wonder I was tired. I believe I have seldom written a sprightly note, but with a view of enlivening a less sprightly letter. All these, therefore, I can easily give up, for I would much sooner be guilty of publishing even a dull book, than by a lively one hurt any deserving friend, or create him an enemy. I have filled my paper so full that I have now no room for *respect* even if I durst use it.

W. M.

[1] This proved the case in Dr. Franklin.—WALPOLE.

soon be no other town left in England, for migrations increase as fast as buildings. All the Scotch and Irish that don't come to London go to America. If you ever return, as I devoutly wish, you will find a larger city than Florence, of which you never saw a street; without including half the adjacent villages, which the town has surrounded or joined. Perhaps it will be at last like Palmyra, in the midst of a vast desert!

Next to gaming, which subsides a little from want of materials, the predominant folly is pictures; I beg their pardon for associating them with gaming. Sir George Colbroke, a citizen, and martyr to what is called *speculation*, had his pictures sold by auction last week. A view of Nimeguen, by Cuyp, not large, and which he had bought very dearly for seventy guineas, sold for two hundred and ninety![1] If they could be sold in proportion, the collection at Houghton would fetch two hundred thousand. A Mr. Pearson, too, who married the Giacomazzi, brought over a few, particularly from Venice. He sold one Guido for two thousand pounds to Mr. Duncombe.[2] The 'Doctors' at Houghton, the first picture in England, and equal to any in Italy but Raphael's, cost but a little above six hundred pounds. Well! we are very rich, and very quiet. I hope it will last! Adieu!

P.S. Miss Davis, the Inglesina, is more admired than anything I remember of late years in operas; but though music is so much in fashion, that some of our fine gentlemen learn to sing, it holds no proportion with hazard and Newmarket. The Cuzzoni and Faustina would not be paid higher than a race-horse.

1432. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

DEAR SIR: *Arlington Street, May* 4, 1774.

WE have dropped one another, as if we were not antiquaries, but people of this world—or do you disclaim me, because I have quitted the Society? I could give you but two sad reasons for my silence. The gout kept entire possession of me for six months; and,

[1] England is especially rich in Cuyps, and this in 1774 was certainly a high price for a fine specimen of the master. A few years later (1794), Angerstein gave 204*l.* 15*s.*, at Sir Laurence Dundas's sale, for the fine Cuyp now in the National Gallery.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] The Guido now (1857) at Duncombe Park in Yorkshire.—CUNNINGHAM.

before it released me, Lord Orford's illness and affairs engrossed me totally. I have been twice in Norfolk since you heard from me. I am now at liberty again. What is your account of yourself? To ask you to come above ground, even so far as to see me, I know is in vain—or I certainly would ask it. You impose Carthusian shackles on yourself, will not quit your cell, nor will speak above once a week. I am glad even to hear of you, and to see your hand, though you make that as much like print as you can. If you were to be tempted abroad, it would be a pilgrimage; and I can lure you even with that. My Chapel is finished, and the shrine will actually be placed in less than a fortnight. My father is said to have said, that every man had his price. You are a *Beatus*, indeed, if you resist a shrine. Why should not you add to your claustral virtues that of a peregrination to Strawberry? You will find me quite alone in July. Consider, Strawberry is almost the last monastery left, at least in England. Poor Mr. Bateman's[1] is despoiled. Lord Bateman has stripped and plundered it: has sequestered the best things, has advertised the site, and is dirtily selling by auction what he neither would keep, nor sell for a sum that is worth while. I was hurt to see half the ornaments of the chapel, and the reliquaries, and in short a thousand trifles, exposed to sneers. I am buying a few to keep for the founder's sake. Surely it is very indecent for a favourite relation, who is rich, to show so little remembrance and affection. I suppose Strawberry will have the same fate! It has already happened to two of my friends. Lord Bristol got his mother's[2] house from his brother [Augustus], by persuading her he was in love with it. He let it in a month after she was dead—and all her favourite pictures and ornaments, which she had ordered not to be removed, are mouldering in a garret!

You are in the right to care so little for a world where there is no measure but avoirdupois. Adieu! Yours sincerely.

[1] See vol. iii. p. 429, and vol. iv. p. 24 and p. 330.—Cunningham.

[2] Lady Hervey's in St. James's Place, overlooking the Green Park. See Augustus Hervey's Letter to George Grenville on his mother's death, 'Grenville Papers,' vol. iv. p. 356.—Cunningham.

1433. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 15, 1774.

This is a great morsel of news, indeed—nay, not that we know actually yet that Louis Quinze is dead; but we conclude so. Lord Stormont's courier arrived on Wednesday, and had left Paris on Sunday night at eleven, when the hiccup was begun. He said he might not be able to write again soon, as all horses would be stopped. Some pretend to say that the King died on Tuesday, others conclude he is recovered—but horses would not be stopped on that account—on the contrary. Many foretell war—not on knowledge. The Dauphin is little known—the first acts of a new King are seldom the expression of his meaning. There is a notion he likes the Chancellor. If Monsieur de Choiseul returns to power, it will want no prophet to announce war. Two of the King's daughters, though they never had the small-pox, attended him, and it is said the Dauphin saw him since the eruption, which was not very prudent. Madame du Barri was retired to the Duc d'Aiguillon's at Ruel. This is all I have heard that I believe. One never attains the last and first accounts of a reign truly, till half a century is past. What is first said is generally the least to be credited. Those reports are coined by vanity of knowing, by credulity, and conjecture.[1] We believed firmly for two days that Sutton the inoculist was at Paris, and that Lord Stormont had been desired to carry him to the King. Sutton was actually in London.

Well! this is an event that will have great consequences in Europe, or in France. Will the new King go to war, or restore the Jesuits? Will the Dauphiness have any weight? Will the Emperor?—Oh! but they say the King of Prussia is dying too. That would make a greater change. The Czarina pretends to have beaten Pugatscheff—but I don't think the story has much the air of truth. A rebel so often beaten, and that still makes a stand, is a new kind of rebel. They are not apt to have so many resources.

The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland have been landed this week. I can believe easily what you tell me of his confidence to Mr. G. The honey-moon was waned to less than a half-moon before he left England.

[1] Did Walpole test his own historical 'Memoirs' by this judgment?—Cunningham.

Pray be very circumspect with your lodger.[1] There is great art, and no sweet temper. I have received a bushel of thanks for your civilities, which I imputed to your own good nature and good breeding, as you deserve.

My late ward [Lord Orford] has fairly washed his hands of me on some very necessary remonstrances on his health and affairs, which I could not in conscience avoid making. I have not had proper returns where I deserved them, if possible, more; but one must do what is right without reward; nor am I of an age to take disappointments to heart. To do right and be at peace is enough; nay, is not doing right being at peace? Kings may die, and men may be mad: can one save them, or cure them? Shall one not enjoy one's own little lot because inevitable events come to pass? Indeed for the loss of their Majesties it is not necessary to preach patience to anybody. The smiles that waited on their every word are at the service of their successor.

Apropos, the other day the Chapter of Westminster opened the grave of Edward I., and found his body, crown, velvet and tissue perfect. The flesh of his lips and cheeks was sound, and his hands perfect, except that one had lost its nails. There was a gauze on the face which had grown into the grain, and they could not lift it up. His measure was six feet two. They had found in 'Rymer,' that they were obliged to bestow a new cerecloth on the corpse every year. That poor service was forgotten after two reigns, and curiosity alone recalled it now after five hundred years. The most extraordinary part is, that it should have been kept up even for two reigns. The Church is seldom a more grateful courtier than a Lord of the Bedchamber. If they cry up a benefactor, it is to inculcate imitation of his *largesses*. I pity Kings; they have more false friends than anybody; and those they love most are certainly the falsest, for they have flattered them most. Louis le Bien-aimé was stabbed, and Henry IV., who deserved that title, was murdered. Every action of a King's life is watched and recorded: what private man could stand such a scrutiny? The greater their power the less they can content, for every man measures his wishes by their power, not by his own merit; and, as Louis Quatorze said, "When I give a place, I make twenty discontented and one ungrateful." Who almost that ever reigned would not be shocked to read his own history?

[1] Mrs. Anne Pitt.—CUNNINGHAM.

The Duke of Cleveland is dead: the greater part of his estate comes to the Duke of Grafton, and I believe either the title of Cleveland or Southampton. The rest of his fortune goes to his nephew, Lord Darlington.

Lord Ilchester[1] has had a stroke of palsy, and it is not the first. How thick calamities fall on that family! Lord Holland drags on a wretched life, and Lady Holland is dying of a cancer. Their youngest and only good son[2] is just gone with his regiment to America.

Tuesday, 17th.

Well! the King of France *is* dead; but nothing farther is yet known. The new King was not to see the Ministers for nine days, so to-morrow will be a bustling day in that Court, and of some importance to this! Adieu!

1434. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, May 28, 1774.

Nothing will be more agreeable to me, dear Sir, than a visit from you in July. I will try and persuade Mr. Granger to meet you; and if you had any such thing as summer in the fens, I would desire you to bring a bag with you. We are almost freezing here in the midst of beautiful verdure, with a profusion of blossoms and flowers; but I keep good fires, and seem to feel warm weather while I look through the window; for the way to ensure summer in England, is to have it framed and glazed in a comfortable room.

I shall be still more glad to hear you are settled in your living. Burnham is almost in my neighbourhood; and its being in that of Eton and Windsor, will more than console you, I hope, for leaving Ely and Cambridge. Pray let me know the moment you are certain. It would now be a disappointment to me as well as you. You shall be inaugurated in my Chapel, which is much more venerable than your parish church, and has the genuine air of antiquity. I bought very little of poor Mr. Bateman's. His nephew disposed of little that was worth house-room, and yet pulled the whole to pieces.

Mr. Pennant has published a new Tour to Scotland and the Hebrides: and, though he has endeavoured to paint their dismal

[1] Stephen Fox, first Earl of Ilchester, and elder brother of Henry Lord Holland.—Walpole.

[2] General Henry Fox.—Cunningham.

isles and rocks in glowing colours, they will not be satisfied; for he seems no bigot about Ossian, at least in some passages; and is free in others, which their intolerating spirit will resent. I cannot say the book is very entertaining to me, as it is more a book of rates than of antiquities. The most amusing part was communicated to him by Mr. Banks, who found whole islands that bear nothing but columns, as other places do grass and barley. There is a beautiful cave called Fingal's; which proves that nature loves Gothic architecture.

Mr. Pennant has given a new edition of his former Tour with more cuts. Among others, is the vulgar head, called the Countess of Desmond. I told him I had discovered, and proved past contradiction, that it is Rembrandt's mother. He owned it, and said, he would correct it by a note—but he has not. This is a brave way of being an antiquary! as if there could be any merit in giving for genuine what one knows to be spurious. He is, indeed, a superficial man, and knows little of history or antiquity; but he has a violent rage for being an author. He set out with Ornithology, and a little Natural History, and picks up his knowledge as he rides. I have a still lower idea of Mr. Gough; for Mr. Pennant, at least, is very civil: the other is a hog. Mr. Fenn,[1] another smatterer in antiquity, but a very good sort of man, told me, Mr. Gough desired to be introduced to me—but as he has been such a bear to you,[2] he shall not come. The Society of Antiquaries put me in mind of what the old Lord Pembroke said to Anstis the herald:[3] "Thou silly fellow! thou dost not know thy own silly business." If they went beyond taste, by poking into barbarous ages, when there was no taste, one could forgive them—but they catch at the first ugly thing they see, and take it for old, because it is new to them, and then usher it pompously into the world, as if they had made a discovery; though they have not yet cleared up a single point that is of the least importance, or that tends to settle any obscure passage in History.

I will not condole with you on having had the gout, since you find it has removed other complaints. Besides, as it begins late, you are never likely to have it severely. I shall be in terrors in

[1] Editor of the 'Paston Letters.' He died in 1794.—Cunningham.

[2] Alluding to his not having answered a letter from Mr. Cole for nearly a twelvemonth.—Cunningham.

[3] Lord Dover (ante, vol. ii. p. 184) gives the saying to Lord Chesterfield.—Cunningham.

two or three months, having had the four last fits periodically and biennially. Indeed, the two last were so long and severe, that my remaining and shattered strength could ill support such.

I must repeat how glad I shall be to have you at Burnham. When people grow old, as you and I do, they should get together. Others do not care for us: but we seem wiser to one another by finding fault with them. Not that I am apt to dislike young folks, whom I think everything becomes; but it is a kind of self-defence to live in a body. I dare to say, that monks never find out that they grow old fools. Their age gives them authority, and nobody contradicts them. In the world, one cannot help perceiving one is out of fashion. Women play at cards with women of their own standing, and censure others between the deals, and thence conclude themselves Gamaliels. *I*, who see many young men with better parts than myself, submit with a good grace, or retreat hither to my castle, where I am satisfied with what I have done, and am always in good humour. But I like to have one or two old friends with me. I do not much invite the juvenile, who think my castle and me of equal antiquity; for no wonder, if they suppose George I. lived in the time of the Crusades.

Adieu! my good Sir, and pray let Burnham Wood and Dunsinane be good neighbours. Yours ever.

1435. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 8, 1774.

We are still in the dark about Louis XVI., and do not know whether he designs to make war on the old Ministers, on us, or on the ladies of pleasure. They represent him as covetous, but he has only retrenched some tables at Court, and has remitted a great sum to the people. As the blessings of the latter are more desirable than those of the nobility, I am apt to think they are more prevalent too than the maledictions of the latter.

As yet there seems to be no colours hung out by which one can judge. D'Aiguillon, it is thought, will fall, though he is said to have betrayed[1] Madame du Barri, and to have prevented her escape. Were I an absolute monarch, which such a man would make one wish one's self, I would forbid him ever to set his foot in a town

[1] This did not prove true.—Walpole.

where there was a single gentleman, as not fit to breathe where there is one. Old La Vrillière,[1] another wretch, is likely to fall too, unpitied. I wish the Chancellor [Maupeou] may too, who is a villanous bashaw. Maurepas does not gain ground. No exiles are recalled. Were the Duc de Choiseul to rise again, I could easily tell what would happen. The Mesdames have had the small-pox, and have escaped, which makes one glad after such meritorious behaviour,—meritorious, but which it was cruel not to restrain.

Indeed, we want no foreign war: the scene in America grows serious. We have this week heard that New York has taken as warm a part as Boston against the teas. The House of Commons sits very late every day, though at this season, on a bill for settling Canada; and though it is said the Parliament will rise next week, I should think the prorogation would be very short, till the news from America are better. Lord Chatham has appeared in the House of Lords, but pleased nobody but Lord Temple, with whom he is again strictly united, which you may mention to his sister [Mrs. Anne Pitt]. This is the sum of public history, at least that I know, who have been very little in town this month.

The Duke of Devonshire and Lady Georgiana Spencer were married on Sunday; and this month Lord Stanley marries Lady Betty Hamilton. He gives her a most splendid entertainment to-morrow at his villa in Surrey,[2] and calls it a *fête champêtre*. It will cost five thousand pounds. Everybody is to go in masquerade, but not in mask. He has bought all the orange-trees round London, and the haycocks, I suppose, are to be made of straw-coloured satin.

Lady Mary Coke is arrived. She has not been false to the Duke of York's bed, but was so frail as to cuckold his vault; for she went down into that at St. Denis with Louis Quatorze, as she did into that at Westminster when the Princess died. Her Grace of Kingston, though a phenomenon, is no original; the purchase of Sixtus Quintus's villa seems to be an imitation of that stroller, Queen Christina.

My Chapel is finished, and Donatello's St. John is enshrined in it. In truth, every chamber at Strawberry is enriched with your presents, which are its most valuable ornaments;—the Caligula, the

[1] Mons. de St. Florentine, Secretary of State, and then Duc de la Vrillière.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Oaks, near Epsom.—CUNNINGHAM.

Castiglione, Bianca Capello, Benvenuto Cellini's casket, the Florentine box. Take notice, I have not an inch of space left, neither in my house nor my gratitude. I have even forgotten some, as the intaglia of an Apollo, and perhaps twenty things more.

I am sorry to tell Mrs. [Anne] Pitt that her house at Knightsbridge has been led astray, the moment she turned her back: see what it is to live in a bad neighbourhood! *Pittsburgh*, the Temple of Vesta, is as naughty as Villa Kingstoniana; not that Dr. Elliot's pretty wife[1] has married another husband in his lifetime; but she has eloped with my Lord Valentia, who has another wife and some half-dozen children. The sages of Doctors' Commons are to be applied to. I am much obliged to Mrs. Pitt for forcing you to tell me you are safe from your verdigris. It would have been shocking to have heard it, and waited for the post. Her ball she described to you was very like the cloth of a thousand yards, on which were painted all the Kings and Queens in the universe, and which cloth was lapped up in the kernel of a nut. You are very happy in having such company; it will indemnify you for forty dozen of bears and bear-leaders, that you have been endeavouring for these thirty years to tame, and the latter half of which never are licked into form. Adieu!

P.S. I am reading Montaigne's Travels, which have lately been found; there is little in them but the baths and medicines he took, and what he had everywhere for dinner. He was in Italy in 1580, and the only thing that has struck me in the first volume was his seeing Bianca Capello at dinner. He describes her very like your—my picture. She sat above the Duke, and her brother and his wife dined with them, and the Cardinal Ferdinand. Montaigne says that the houses in Italy at that time had no glass windows. His editor, who is a silly fellow, says Pius V. obliged Cosimo the Great to marry[2] his mistress Camilla Martelli. I never heard this anecdote; is it true? Pray ask Mrs. Pitt if Madame Griffoni, though thirteen years younger, preserves any remains of beauty, like the Duchess of Queensberry. I take my Signora to be full threescore.

[1] Miss Dalrymple, wife of Sir John Elliot, the physician, from whom she was divorced for many adulteries, and became a celebrated courtezan, known by the name of Dolly the Tall. Sir John Elliot had bought Mrs. Anne Pitt's villa at Knightsbridge, where the Duchess of Kingston and the Duke of Rutland's mistress had villas also.—WALPOLE.

[2] Cosimo I. did marry Camilla Martelli.—WALPOLE.

* 11*th.*

I had forgotten to send my letter to town, and so can answer one I have this instant received from you. I am more sorry for your disappointment in losing your new friend[1] than surprised. There is a strange oddness, that at times has been more than oddness; in short, I do not know whether I am quite sorry; it is better to have parted in violent friendship than the contrary.

The Duc d'Aiguillon is certainly out of place, and is succeeded by M. de Vergennes, Ambassador at Stockholm, of whom I know nothing; M. de Muy has the *département de la Guerre*. The young King seems in no hurry. There is a notion that he does not love the English. I don't know where he will find the Minister that does; but if the Queen has influence, and her brother has any over her, we shall not have a war—from thence: I will not answer for Spain.

1436. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, June 12, 1774.

I RECOMMEND this with your two tracts on gardening to Mr. Fraser; you see I hasten to send you straw, that your brick-kiln may blaze. I shall send you soon Fitzpatrick's 'Town Eclogue,' from my own furnace.[2] The verses are charmingly smooth and easy, but I am much mistaken if you like them so well as Charles Fox's,[3] as the former have certainly no novelty to recommend them, though there is one line about *squeezing*[4] that is delightful.

The *manie des jardins Anglois* is very silly, and unpoetic even for French verse. The other author has stolen all his ideas from us, and is ungrateful, is very French too, absurd and superficial, meaning to be philosophic; has no idea of situation, but thinks it can be made; and in reality does not conceive helping or improving nature, but would make puppet-shows for different ranks. He puts me in mind

[1] Mrs. Anne Pitt.—WALPOLE.

[2] 'Dorinda, a Town Eclogue; Strawberry Hill, printed by Thomas Kirgate, 1775.' 4to, 300 copies printed.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Lines by C. J. Fox, addressed 'To Mrs. Crewe,' and printed at Strawberry Hill. —CUNNINGHAM.

[4] The faithful hand can unobserved impart
The secret feelings of a tender heart:
And oh! what bliss, when each alike is pleased,
The hand that squeezes, and the hand that's squeezed.
—CUNNINGHAM.

of one of his countrymen, who seeing some of ours hang up their hats on a row of pegs at a tavern, said, *on voit bien que c'est une nation qui pense.* I think they are ten times more foolish since they took to thinking.

By the waters of Babylon we sit down and weep, when we think of thee, O America! Tribulation on Tribulation! Since Gage's defeat, eighteen, some say twenty-eight thousand men have invested Boston; ten thousand more are on their march from Rhode Island. Two ships laden with provisions for him have been destroyed at New York, and all his Majesty's friends turned out thence. *Nous ne scavons plus à quel Saint nous vouer.* The City says there must be a pacification and a change of actors. Much good may it do those who will read their parts! Old *Garrick*[1] perhaps will return to the stage, because he has no time to lose:—however, the manager's company talks of a troop of Hessians, &c.

I have got another Noble Author, Lord Mahon. He writes on the gold coin; if he can make gold as well as coin, he will be of great use to his father-in-law *Garrick*, and a very good prop to his Administration. Your old Pollio [Holdernesse] is returned very lean and very deaf. Considering all things, methinks you might now hold a lodge, Mr. Mason. Adieu!

P.S. Here is the Eclogue [Fitzpatrick's 'Dorinda'].

1437. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1774.

Virgin Mary! offended at you, Madam! I have crossed myself forty times since I read the impious words, never to be pronounced by human lips,—nay, and to utter them, when I am seemingly to blame,—yet, believe me, my silence is not owing to negligence, or to that most wicked of all sins, inconstancy. I have thought on you waking or sleeping, whenever I have thought at all, from the moment I saw you last; and if there was an echo in the neighbourhood besides Mr. Cambridge, I should have made it repeat your Ladyship's name, till the parish should have presented it for a nuisance. I have begun twenty letters, but the naked truth is, I found I had absolutely nothing to say. You yourself owned, Madam, that I am grown quite lifeless, and it is very true. I am none of your Glas-

[1] Lord Chatham.—Cunningham.

tonbury thorns that blow at Christmas. I am a remnant of the last age, and have nothing to do with the present. I am an exile from the sunbeams of drawing-rooms; I have quitted the gay scenes of Parliament and the Antiquarian Society; I am not of Almack's; I don't understand horse-races; I never go to reviews; what can I have to talk of? I go to no *fêtes champêtres*, what can I have to think of? I know nothing but about myself, and about myself I know nothing. I have scarce been in town since I saw you, have scarce seen anybody here, and don't remember a tittle but having scolded my gardener twice, which, indeed, would be as important an article as any in Montaigne's Travels, which I have been reading, and if I was tired of his Essays, what must one be of these! What signifies what a man thought, who never thought of anything but himself; and what signifies what a man did, who never did anything?

I hear nothing from France, but that M. d'Aiguillon has given up the seals. Lady Mary Coke is arrived, but as she never condescends to level her telescope but at the fixed stars, she certainly knows nothing of the meteors of the day, and therefore I shall not expect much intelligence from her.

Mr. Anstey, who ought to have shot himself the moment he had finished the 'Bath Guide,' has published the most complete piece of stupidity I ever read. It is a satire on a parson who writes against him in the newspapers, and cannot, it is impossible, have written worse than Anstey himself. The latter has been enrolled in Mr. Miller's Parnassus at Bath, and is quite raving mad that his *bouts rimés* are not admired. What shall we come to? I am afraid of opening a new book. The reigning dulness is so profound, that it is not even ridiculous.

Thank Heaven the age is as dull as I am! Pray tell me, Madam, some of Lady Anne's *bons-mots* to enliven me a little. I am expecting Lords Ashburnham, March, Digby, Williams, and George Selwyn.

N.B. I shall not ask for any of the Fagnanina's sayings. It is a dinner in honour of Lord Ashburnham, who procured for me the window of my Chapel, which is just finished and divine, and ready against the Catholic religion is quite restored. Miss Aikin has been here this morning (she is just married[1]); she desired to see the Castle of Otranto; I let her see all the antiquities of it.

[1] To Mr. Barbauld.—CUNNINGHAM.

1438. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 21, 1774.

Your illness, dear Sir, is the worst excuse you could make me; and the worse, as you may be well in a night, if you will, by taking six grains of James's Powder. He cannot cure death; but he can most complaints that are not mortal or chronical. He could cure you so soon of colds, that he would cure you of another distemper, to which I doubt you are a little subject, the *fear of them*. I hope you were certain, that illness is a legal plea for missing induction, or you will have nursed a cough and hoarseness with too much tenderness, as they certainly could bear a journey. Never see my face again, if you are not rector of Burnham. How can you be so bigoted to Milton? I should have thought the very name would have prejudiced you against the place, as the name is all that could approach towards reconciling me to the fens. I shall be very glad to see you here, whenever you have resolution enough to quit your cell. But since Burnham and the neighbourhood of Windsor and Eton have no charms for you, can I expect that Strawberry Hill should have any? Methinks, when one grows old, one's contemporary friends should be our best amusement; for younger people are soon tired of us, and our old stories: but I have found the contrary in some of mine. For your part, you care for conversing with none but the dead: for I reckon the unborn, for whom you are writing, as much dead as those from whom you collect.

You certainly ask no favour, dear Sir, when you want prints of me. They are at anybody's service that thinks them worth having. The owner sets very little value on them, since he sets very little, indeed, on himself: as a man, a very faulty one; and as an author, a very middling one: which whoever thinks a comfortable rank, is not at all of my opinion. Pray convince me that you think I mean sincerely, by not answering me with a compliment. It is very weak to be pleased with flattery; the stupidest of all delusions to beg it. From you I should take it ill. We have known one another almost fifty years—to very little purpose, indeed, if any ceremony is necessary, or downright sincerity not established between us. Only tell me that you are recovered, and that I shall see you some time or other. I have finished the Catalogue of my collection; but you shall never have it without fetching, nor, though a less punishment,

the prints you desire. I propose in time to have plates of my house added to the Catalogue, yet I cannot afford them, unless by degrees. Engravers are grown so much dearer, without my growing richer, that I must have patience! a quality I seldom have, *but* when I *must*. Adieu! Yours ever.

P.S. I have lately been at Ampthill, and saw Queen Katherine's Cross. It is not near large enough for the situation, and would be fitter for a garden than a park: but it is executed in the truest and best taste. Lord Ossory is quite satisfied, as well as I, and designs Mr. Essex a present of some guineas. If ever I am richer, I shall consult the same honest man about building my Offices [at Strawberry], for which I have a plan: but if I have no more money ever, I will not run in debt, and distress myself; and therefore remit my designs to chance and a little economy.

1439. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, June 23, 1774.

I HAVE nothing to say—which is the best reason in the world for writing; for one must have a great regard for anybody one writes to, when one begins a letter neither on ceremony nor business. You are seeing armies,[1] who are always in fine order and great spirits when they are in cold blood: I am sorry you thought it worth while to realise what I should have thought you could have seen in your mind's eye. However, I hope you will be amused and pleased with viewing heroes, both in their autumn and their bud. Vienna will be a new sight; so will the Austrian eagle and its two heads. I should like *seeing*, too, if any fairy would present me with a chest that would fly up into the air by touching a peg, and transport me whither I pleased in an instant: but roads, and inns, and dirt are terrible drawbacks on my curiosity. I grow so old, or so indolent, that I scarce stir from hence; and the dread of the gout makes me almost as much a prisoner, as a fit of it. News I know none, if there is any. The papers tell me the City was to present a petition to the King against the Quebec Bill yesterday; and I suppose they will tell me to-morrow whether it was presented. The King's Speech tells me, there has nothing happened between the Russians

[1] Mr. Conway was now on a tour of military curiosity through Flanders, Germany, Prussia, and part of Hungary.—WALPOLE.

and the Turks.[1] Lady Barrymore told me t'other day, that nothing was to happen between her and Lord Egremont. I am as well satisfied with these negatives, as I should have been with the contrary. I am much more interested about the rain, for it destroys all my roses and orange-flowers, of which I have exuberance; and my hay is cut, and cannot be made. However, it is delightful to have no other distresses. When I compare my present tranquillity and indifference with all I suffered last year,[2] I am thankful for my happiness, and enjoy it—unless the bell rings at the gate early in the morning—and then I tremble, and think it an express from Norfolk.

It is unfortunate, that when one has nothing to talk of but one's self, one should have nothing to say of one's self. It is shameful, too, to send such a scrap by the post. I think I shall reserve it till Tuesday. If I have then nothing to add, as is probable, you must content yourself with my good intentions, as you, I hope, will with this speculative campaign. Pray, for the future, remain at home, and build bridges: I wish you were here to expedite ours to Richmond, which they tell me will not be passable these two years. I have done looking so forward. Adieu!

1440. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1774.

THE month is come round, and I have, besides, a letter of yours to answer; and yet if I were not as regular as a husband or a merchant in paying my just dues, I think I should not perform the function, for I certainly have no natural call to it at present. Nothing in yours requires a response, and I have nothing new to tell you. Yet, if one once breaks in upon punctuality, adieu to it! I will not give out, after a perseverance of three-and-thirty years; and so far I will not resemble a husband.

The whole blood royal of France is recovered from the small-pox. Both Choiseul and Broglio are recalled, and I have some idea that even the old Parliament will be so. The King is adored, and a most beautiful compliment has been paid to him: somebody wrote under the statue of Henri Quatre, *Resurrexit.*

[1] Peace between Russia and Turkey was proclaimed at St. Petersburg on the 14th of August, 1774.—WRIGHT.

[2] During the illness of his nephew, Lord Orford.—CUNNINGHAM.

Lord Holland is at last dead, and Lady Holland is at the point of death. His sons would still be in good circumstances, if they were not *his* sons; but he had so totally spoiled the two eldest, that they would think themselves bigots if they were to have common sense. The prevailing style is not to reform, though Lord Lyttelton [the bad Lord] pretends to have set the example. Gaming, for the last month, has exceeded its own outdoings, though the town is very empty. It will be quite so to-morrow, for Newmarket begins, or rather the youth adjourn thither. After that they will have two or three months of repose; but if they are not severely blooded and blistered, there will be no alteration. Their pleasures are no more entertaining to others, than delightful to themselves; one is tired of asking every day, who has won or lost? and even the portentous sums they lose, cease to make impression. One of them has committed a murder, and intends to repeat it. He betted 1500*l.* that a man could live twelve hours under water; hired a desperate fellow, sunk him in a ship, by way of experiment, and both ship and man have not appeared since. Another man and ship are to be tried for their lives, instead of Mr. Blake, the assassin.

Christina, Duchess of Kingston, is arrived, in a great fright, I believe, for the Duke's nephews are going to prove her first marriage, and hope to set the Will aside. It is a pity her friendship with the Pope had not begun earlier; he might have given her a dispensation. If she loses her cause, the best thing he can do will be to give her the veil.

I am sorry all Europe will not furnish me with another paragraph. Africa is, indeed, coming into fashion. There is just returned a Mr. Bruce, who has lived three years in the Court of Abyssinia, and breakfasted every morning with the Maids of Honour on live oxen. Otaheite and Mr. Banks are quite forgotten; but Mr. Blake,[1] I suppose, will order a live sheep for supper at Almack's, and ask whom he shall help to a piece of the shoulder. Oh, yes; we shall have negro butchers, and French cooks will be laid aside. My Lady Townshend [Harrison], after the Rebellion, said, everybody was so bloodthirsty, that she did not dare to dine abroad, for fear of meeting with a rebel-pie—now one shall be asked to come and eat a bit of raw mutton. In truth, I do think we are ripe for any extravagance. I am not wise enough to wish the world reasonable—I only desire to have follies that are amusing, and am sorry Cervantes laughed chivalry out of fashion. Adieu!

[1] Who betted on the man's living under water twelve hours.—WALPOLE.

1441. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 19, 1774.

I SEND you by the Fraser-Mercury the Itinerary of Mr. Gray with my manuscript additions. I don't know whether I have made them too long or too short, but as you are entirely at liberty to curtail or lengthen, or omit such as you disapprove, it does not signify what they are. They have indeed a fault I cannot mend, unless by time, and which yet I probably shall not mend: I mean they are not complete; for there are some considerable places that I never saw, and I am grown too lazy since I can walk but little, to think of visiting them now.

I shall take care how I wish earnestly again for your coming southward: you gave me so little of your time and was so much in request, that I was only tantalised. I like your fixed stars that one can pore at when one pleases; but there is such a fuss with you comets, that even women and children must know all about them.

I know nothing but that we have deplorable weather; the sun, like you, has called but once at Strawberry. To make amends, the cold has brought on the winter fruits so fast, that I had a codlin tart to-day, and expect pears and apples ripe before peaches and nectarines. I wish we had never imported those southern delicacies, unless we had brought their climate over too. We should have been very happy with our hips and haws, and rainy days, and *called it luxury*.[1] I cannot afford to have hot-houses, aud glass-houses, and acres of tanner's bark, as every tradesman has at his villa, or at his mistress's villa. I kill my own strawberries and cream, and can aim no higher.

Do you know that it would be charity to send me something to print, or to tell me what I shall print. My press is at a dead stand, and I would fain employ it while I may, without permission of a Licencer, for though it has always been as harmless as if it was under the cannon of Sion Hill [Lord Holdernesse], it would be *vocat no more*, if it might only utter Dutch Bibles, or editions *in usum Delphini*. I know you have twenty things in your portefeuille. I will print as few copies as you please. I have no ambition of serving or amusing the public, and think of nothing but diverting myself and

[1] From Addison.—CUNNINGHAM.

the few I love. What signifies taking the trouble to be put, I don't know how soon, into an *Index Expurgatorius!* To-day is ours; let us enjoy it.'

Yours ever,

H. W.

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Aston, Aug.* 9, 1774.

I OUGHT to have thanked you much sooner for your notes on Mr. Gray's 'Itinerary,' and your obliging letter. These additions will be extremely useful to the public, if ever the public deserves well enough of any person to reprint the Catalogue in question. Whether I shall take that pains is at present very doubtful; if I do, it will not be for the sake of that public, but only to get its money, to make a better use of it than it usually makes of it itself.

I have employed myself since I came down in endeavouring to supply the chasms in the sheets, where the objectionable notes, &c., occurred, and I purpose to call at York the latter end of this week in my way to Scarborough, and shall leave the altered copy with Mr. Bedingfield that my printer and he may settle the text. When this is done, I mean on my return hither to proceed as speedily as I can to a conclusion, for I begin now to be very desirous of having it finished.

I paid a visit the other day at Wentworth Castle, where I found the noble owners very solitary, but to all appearance perfectly happy. They had been that morning at Wortley on a visit to Lady Bute, who is now there settling accounts with her stewards from morning to night. Lady Mary Coke is expected at Wentworth Castle next week, and they wish much for you, *per trastullarsi coll' istessa Principessa.* Neither do they think the excuse you make of waiting at Strawberry for a much less entertaining biennial companion, a very good or even a rational one. I must own I have the honour to think precisely as they do on this occasion, and I heartily hope you will be disappointed of your company even if you expect him or her, (for I know not of which sex the creature is of,) ever so impatiently. Lucian I know makes her female, and a goddess, but Lucian was a heathen, and wrote heathen Greek. You flatter me much by offering to open your Strawberry press for me, but I have nothing by me that in any sort merits such an honour. Scraps I have, and fragments dramatic and lyric in plenty, but nothing in any sort finished, or capable of being finished at present. Why not return again to your 'Miscellaneous Antiquities?' why should the neglect of the public prevent you from proceeding? There may come a public hereafter who will not neglect them, and if such a public never comes, your private amusement is still secured. Try them if you please with the more modern parts of Mr. Gray's transcripts—my Lord Rochester's letters for instance: I'll lay my life they will devour them greedily. You know that neither I nor my curate [Mr. Alderson] perfectly relished Sir Thomas Wyat's eloquence, and yet my curate and I are neither of us the dupes of fashion, but speak what we think in all simplicity; treat us, therefore, with something more to our *gout*, and the world, even the great world, will not disdain to follow our plain Yorkshire taste.

I believe Mr. Palgrave and I shall stay about a fortnight or three weeks at Scarbro'; in the meanwhile a letter directed to me here near *ROTHERHAM* (I write it in capitals to impress it on your memory) will be forwarded to me. Mr. Palgrave begs his best compliments; as to myself I need not say how truly and sincerely I am yours,

W. MASON.

1442. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 30, 1774.

I CAN satisfy few of your ladyship's questions about Lady Holland, except by what little I heard from Mr. Crawfurd, who came hither one evening between eight and nine, and went away the moment he had breakfasted the next morning. Of her death he told me nothing. The fortune he thinks much more considerable than the family expected. This Lord Holland will have 10,000*l.* a-year. Charles Fox will be entirely cleared, have his place, and 200*l.* a-year, and 10,000*l.*, a pretty beginning for a younger brother, for Julius Cæsar not a breakfast. Henry has 20,000*l.*, and 900*l.* a-year. There is a strange legacy to Lady Sarah of 200*l.*, and Mrs. Mellier is forgotten. Undoubtedly poor Lady Holland knew little what she said: indeed six hundred drops of laudanum every day could leave her very little reflection.

Lord Thomond's no-Will [1] is still more surprising, as he was persuaded he should die this year. He had had a draft of a Will from his lawyer three years ago, and had not filled up the blanks. As he had taken the government of Lord Egremont's next brother, that boy was supposed his heir. Lord Egremont has made strict inquiry, and said he would comply literally with whatever he could learn were his uncle's instructions; but nobody can recollect the smallest hint. They say Lord Egremont was his favourite, and I believe he chose this way of heaping everything on the head of the Wyndhams.

Pray, Madam, tell the Duchess of Bedford how sensible I am of her goodness. I am thoroughly so of the merits of the whole Fitzpatrickhood, but it is very hard to set me on thrumming a lyre like an old blind harper when you have such a cygnet amongst you as Mr. Richard.[2] I shall certainly let him know immediately how glad I shall be to see him, if he will bring his own company with him, or I can assemble any he would like; but do not think I will punish him with a *tête-à-tête*, and my stories of the last age. Nothing upon earth is so insipid as my life to anybody but myself. For example, how do you think, Madam, he would have found me employed if he

[1] Percy Wyndham O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, second son of Sir William Wyndham, and younger brother of Charles, Earl of Egremont.—WALPOLE.

[2] The late General Fitzpatrick.—R. VERNON SMITH.

had called yesterday? Writing the history of Twickenham, and surrounded with books of peerages to find out who an ancient Lady Westmoreland[1] was that lived in the back lane here. Think of my joy when I discovered that she was sister of Grammont's Lady Shrewsbury, and aunt of [Granville's] 'Myra,' of the first Duchess of Richmond, and of a Lady Molyneux, who was a toast of the Kit Cat Club, and died smoking a pipe! Judge how much Mr. Fitzpatrick would be amused with such game!

There is little probability of my accompanying Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer to Paris. I am within two months of my biennial fit of the gout, and for the last four days have been alarmed with symptoms of it, as great nervousness and feverish pains flying about me. It would be more prudent to go to Bath, or to the seaside: I detest the first, and do not know how to amuse myself at the second. In truth I am not very ill, for I slept last night from half an hour past twelve till nine; but my dread of the gout is incredible, and of having it anywhere but at home still greater, so that unless I have a slight fit soon, I shall not have courage for a long journey, though I have curiosity to peep at the new reign. I have been charmingly interrupted; Mr. Fitzpatrick has been here two hours; I told him what I had said to your ladyship, and sent him back with his pocket stuffed with books, but such as he may read when his servant is curling his hair. One was a collection of ballads in Queen Anne's time! I hope they will put him in tune. Now for the Court of France. Monsieur de Boynes, a rising genius in the last ministry, is turned out, and a Monsieur Turgot made Secretary of State for the marine in his room, a friend of Maurepas. The Duke of Orleans and the Duke of Chartres are forbidden the Court for refusing to assist at the Catafalque of the late king, where they must have saluted the Parliament, whom they will not acknowledge—however, this rod is supposed to be laid on only in ceremony, and my letters bid me not conclude thence that the new parliament will be maintained; accordingly I conclude it will not. My faith about things indifferent is pretty obedient, and may be led like a child. Consequently I would not for the world have a table of *trou-madame*, without a king and a queen: I should detest a republican table, and wish I could have one cut out of the same log of wood with your ladyship's for the sake of the hereditary line.

[1] Dorothy Brudenell, wife of Charles, third Earl of Westmoreland, afterwards married to Robert Constable Viscount Dunbar. She died in 1739.—Cunningham.

Let me beseech you if it thunders to go into the cellar, and say the collect about bad weather. I could not bear another disappointment in the right line, and am not indifferent to that succession, but beg my *trou-madame* may have a king as well as a queen.

1443. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Aug. 3, 1774.

I TOLD you in my last that her Grace of Kingston was arrived. Had I written it four-and-twenty hours later, I might have told you she was gone again, with much precipitation, and with none of the pomp of her usual progresses. In short, she had missed her lawyer's letters, which warned her against returning. A prosecution for bigamy was ready to meet her. She decamped in the middle of the night; and six hours after, the officers of justice were at her door to seize her. This is but an unheroic catastrophe of her romance; and though she is as thorough a comedian as Sixtus Quintus, it would be a little awkward to take possession of his villa, after being burnt in the hand. What will be the issue of the suit and law-suit I cannot tell. As so vast an estate is the prize, the lawyers will probably protract it beyond this century. Her friend the Electress of Saxony said to the Duke of Gloucester, "Poor thing! what could she do; she was so young when she was first married?"

Lady Holland is dead—just three weeks after her Lord. She has cleared all the debts of her two elder sons; the eldest has a large fortune, and Charles a decent beginning of another; though it may not last a night, if he chooses to make it a codicil to all he has lost, and scorns to be indebted to anything but his own parts for his elevation.

Lord Thomond is dead too; and though possessed of nearly ten thousand a-year, and fifty thousand in money, nay, though he has long expected to die suddenly, and at the same age with his grandfather, father, and brother, as he has done, he could not bring himself to make a Will, and the whole real estate falls to his nephew, Lord Egremont.

These are all the events of this inactive summer; and I chose this small paper, as abundantly large enough to contain them. Nay, I do not see how I shall reach its third page.

I find that in France, they are persuaded the old Parliament will be restored. The Dukes of Orleans and Chartres are again for-

bidden the Court for refusing to assist at the *catafalque* of the late King, where they must have saluted the new Parliament: yet this is not thought a disgrace. Monsieur de Boines is removed for a Monsieur Turgot. I see, however, that the old spirit remains at least in one quarter, and that they continue butchering the poor Corsicans. Is it true that the King of Sardinia is to have that island? How unfortunate it is that little countries should retain a spirit of independence, which they have not strength to preserve; and that great nations, who might throw it off, court the yoke!

4th.

Oh! my dear Sir, what a heartfelt pleasure I have had this moment! I have been to Mr. Croft's to see your picture. It brought the tears into my eyes; though thirty years have fattened you, made you florid, I traced every feature, and saw the whole likeness in the character and countenance—yes, there is all your goodness. I admire the art of the painter too; there is harmony in the tone, and though he has given you an Adonis-wig, which we should not think adapted to your age, he has managed it so as to have no juvenile air, but to harmonise in the utmost propriety with the decency of the ministerial composure. In short, as I did once before, I wanted to seize it for my own—but no! it will go to Linton, and I hope remain there for ages—which would not, I suppose, be its fate at Strawberry; that poor bauble will probably be condemned and pulled to pieces by whomever I shall give it to. Our living deeds create no gratitude; can we expect our affection expressed in a last Will should make stronger impressions?

Mr. Croft showed me a letter from you on Birmingham covers for dishes. He has written, but received no answer. I told him I would advise you against them. All plated silver wears abominably, and turns to brass, like the age. You would not bear it six months. He told me that your nephew Horace is on the road to you: how glad I am! what joy to embrace dear Gal.'s son! I think I have seen too many bad hearts in the countenance, not to know when I see a good one; yes, yes, you will find Gal. and yourself in your nephew. I am as sure there is goodness in his heart, as I am that there is sense in his head, and quickness in his parts. I was charmed with him last year; and don't fancy it is partiality if you think so too the first minute you see him. Certain characters strike fire from each other.

The King of Prussia has been amazingly gracious to General

Conway, and ordered him to attend him to all his reviews. This is most astonishing favour to an Englishman. For my part, I am sorry; I had rather such virtue had been marked by his frown. *There are many Marius's in that Cæsar*, a quotation you will not suspect me of intending for a compliment! Adieu!

1444. TO GEORGE SELWYN.

Strawberry Hill, Wednesday, Aug. 10th, at night [1774.]

I THINK I shall be with you [at Matson, in Gloucestershire] on Saturday; at least, I know that I intend to set out to-morrow, and lie at Park Place. But it is so formidable to me to begin a journey, and I have changed my mind so often about this, though I like it so much, that I beg you will not be disappointed if you do not see me. If I were juvenile enough to set off at midnight, and travel all night you would be sure of me; but folks who do anything eagerly, neither know nor care what they do. Sedate men, who deliberate, at least do not determine but on preference; therefore, if I surmount difficulties, I shall at least have some merit with you; and, if I do not, you must allow that the difficulties were prodigious, when they surmounted so much inclination.

In this wavering situation I wish you good night, and hope I shall wake to-morrow as resolute as Hercules or Mr. Bruce [the Abyssinian traveller]. But pray do not give me live-beef for supper.

Yours ever.

1445. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Thursday, Aug. 11, 1774.

THOUGH my chaise is at the door, and the wind and tide fair, I cannot receive a line from you, Madam, to tell me so kindly you are well, without stopping a minute to answer it. I am disappointed, I am vexed, but I am happy you are so soon in spirits again. Don't trust to your strength, nor your health, which is the only way to keep both. Don't be brave this month: the weather is already much cooler, and you need not catch cold to prove how intolerable the heat is. I don't design to acknowledge Anne III.; I shall call her *Madame de trop*, as they named one of the late King of France's

daughters. A *dauphin!* a *dauphin!* I will repeat it as often as the *Graces*. *Apropos*, Mr. Cambridge came yesterday and said he must ask to see something I had lately written. I had kept it a profound secret, but concluded Garrick had told him of the verses, and that it was vain to deny them. Well, I produced them. He stared, was civil about them, and said he was glad he had got them into the bargain, for he had not heard of them, but meant the parody of Lord Chesterfield's Letters, which was quite out of my head. I was horridly out of countenance, and to rap my own fingers for my blunder, would not show him what he wanted. This comes of your ladyship's flattering me!

One may weed and weed one's heart, but if a grain of that devil, vanity, lights on it, it springs up till it chokes one. You have no notion how vexed I was at my own folly—a boy-poet would scarce have been caught so! It is in vain to say, the woman gave me and I did eat.

Adieu! my Eve; as angry as I am, I wish you no worse punishment than hers, and I hope it will fall on you before eleven months are over.

1446. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

DEAR SIR: *Matson,*[1] *near Gloucester, Aug.* 15, 1774.

As I am your disciple in antiquities (for you studied them when I was but a scoffer), I think it my duty to give you some account of my journeyings in the good cause. You will not dislike my date. I am in the very mansion where King Charles the First and his two eldest sons lay during the siege; and there are marks of the last's hacking with his hanger on a window, as he told Mr. Selwyn's grandfather afterwards. The present master has done due honour to the royal residence, and erected a good marble bust of the Martyr, in a little gallery. In a window is a shield in painted glass, with that King's and his Queen's arms, which I gave him. So you see I am not a rebel, when *alma mater* antiquity stands godmother.

I went again to the cathedral, and, on seeing the monument of Edward II. a new historic doubt started, which I pray you to solve. His Majesty has a longish beard; and such were certainly worn at

[1] The seat of George Selwyn.—CUNNINGHAM.

that time. Who is the first historian that tells the story of his being shaven with cold water from a ditch, and weeping to supply warm, as he was carried to Berkeley Castle? Is not this apocryphal? The house whence Bishop Hooper was carried to the stake, is still standing *tale quale*. I made a visit to his actual successor, Warburton, who is very infirm, speaks with much hesitation, and, they say, begins to lose his memory. They have destroyed the beautiful Cross; the two battered heads of Henry III. and Edward III. are in the post-master's garden.

Yesterday I made a jaunt four miles hence that pleased me exceedingly, to Prinknash, the individual villa of the abbots of Gloucester. I wished you there with their mitre on. It stands on a glorious but impracticable hill, in the midst of a little forest of beech, and commanding Elysium. The house is small, but has good rooms, and though modernised here and there, not extravagantly. On the ceiling of the hall is Edward IVth's jovial device, a *fau-con serrure*. The chapel is low and small, but antique, and with painted glass, with many angels in their coronation robes, *i. e.*, wings and crowns. Henry VIII. and Jane Seymour lay here: in the dining-room are their arms in glass, and of Catherine of Arragon, and of Brays and Bridges. Under the window, a barbarous bas-relief head of Harry, young: as it is still on the sign of an ale-house, on the descent of the hill. Think of my amazement, when they showed me the chapel plate, and I found on it, on four pieces, my own arms, quartering my mother-in-law [step-mother], Skerret's, and in a shield of pretence, those of Fortescue; certainly by mistake, for those of my sister-in-law, as the barony of Clinton was in abeyance between her and Fortescue Lord Clinton. The whole is modern and blundered: for Skerret should be impaled, not quartered, and instead of our crest, are two spears tied together in a ducal coronet, and no coronet for my brother, in whose time this plate must have been made, and at whose sale it was probably bought; as he finished the repairs of the church at Houghton, for which, I suppose, this decoration was intended. But the silversmith was no herald, you see.

As I descended the hill, I found in a wretched cottage a child, in an ancient oaken cradle, exactly in the form of that lately published from the cradle of Edward II. I purchased it for five shillings; but don't know whether I shall have fortitude enough to transport it to Strawberry Hill. People would conclude me in my second childhood.

To-day I have been at Berkeley and Thornbury Castles. The

first disappointed me much, though very entire. It is much smaller than I expected, but very entire, except a small part burnt two years ago, while the present Earl was in the house. The fire began in the housekeeper's room, who never appeared more; but as she was strict over the servants, and not a bone of her was found, it was supposed that she was murdered, and the body conveyed away. The situation is not elevated nor beautiful, and little improvements made of late, but some silly ones *à la Chinoise*, by the present Dowager. In good sooth, I can give you but a very imperfect account; for, instead of the lord's being gone to dine with the mayor of Gloucester, as I expected, I found him in the midst of all his captains of the Militia. I am so sillily shy of strangers and youngsters, that I hurried through the chambers, and looked for nothing but the way out of every room. I just observed that there were many bad portraits of the family, but none ancient; as if the Berkeleys had been commissaries, and raised themselves in the last war. There is a plentiful addition of those of Lord Berkeley of Stratton, but no knights templars, or barons as old as Edward I.; yet are there three beds on which there may have been as frisky doings three centuries ago, as there probably have been within these ten years. The room shown for the murder of Edward II., and the shrieks of an agonising king, I verily believe to be genuine. It is a dismal chamber, almost at top of the house, quite detached, and to be approached only by a kind of foot-bridge, and from that descends a large flight of steps that terminate on strong gates; exactly a situation for a *corps de garde*. In that room they show you a cast of a face in plaster, and tell you it was taken from Edward's. I was not quite so easy of faith about that; for it is evidently the face of Charles I.

The steeple of the church, lately rebuilt handsomely, stands some paces from the body; in the latter are three tombs of the old Berkeleys, with cumbent figures. The wife of the Lord Berkeley,[1] who was supposed to be privy to the murder, has a curious head-gear; it is like a long horse-shoe, quilted in quatrefoils; and, like Lord Foppington's wig, allows no more than the breadth of a half-crown to be discovered of the face. Stay, I think I mistake; the

[1] Thomas, third Lord Berkeley, was entrusted with the custody of Edward II.; but, owing to the humanity with which he treated the captive monarch, he was forced to resign his prisoner and his castle to Lord Maltravers and Sir Thomas Gournay. After the murder of Edward, Lord Berkeley was arraigned as a participator in the crime, but honourably acquitted. The Lady Berkeley alluded to by Walpole was his first wife, Margaret, daughter of Roger de Mortimer, Earl of March, and widow of Robert Vere, Earl of Oxford.—Wright.

husband was a conspirator against Richard II. not Edward. But in those days, loyalty was not so rife as at present.

From Berkeley Castle I went to Thornbury, of which the ruins are half ruined. It would have been glorious, if finished.[1] I wish the Lords of Berkeley had retained the spirit of deposing till Henry the VIIIth's time! The situation is fine, though that was not the fashion; for all the windows of the great apartment look into the inner court. The prospect was left to the servants. Here I had two adventures. I could find nobody to show me about. I saw a paltry house that I took for the sexton's, at the corner of the close, and bade my servant ring, and ask who could show me the Castle. A voice in a passion flew from a casement, and issued from a divine. "What! was it his business to show the Castle? Go look for somebody else! What did the fellow ring for as if the house was on fire?" The poor Swiss came back in a fright, and said, the doctor had sworn at him. Well—we scrambled over a stone stile, saw a room or two glazed near the gate, and rung at it. A damsel came forth, and satisfied our curiosity. When we had done seeing, I said, "Child, we don't know our way, and want to be directed into the London road; I see the Duke's steward yonder at the window, pray desire him to come to me, that I may consult him." She went—he stood staring at us at the window, and sent his footman. I do not think courtesy is resident at Thornbury. As I returned through the close, the divine came running out of breath, and without his beaver or band, and calls out, "Sir, I am come to justify myself: your servant says I swore at him: I am no swearer—Lord bless me! (dropping his voice) it is Mr. Walpole!" "Yes, Sir, and I think you was Lord Beauchamp's tutor at Oxford, but I have forgot your name." "Holwell,[2] Sir." "Oh! yes—" and then I comforted him, and laid the ill-breeding on my footman's being a foreigner; but could not help saying, I really had taken his house for the sexton's. "Yes, Sir, it is not very good without, won't you please to walk in?" I did, and found the inside ten times worse, and a lean wife, suckling a child. He was making an Index to Homer, is going to publish the chief beauties, and I believe had just been reading some of the delicate civilities that pass between

[1] Thornbury Castle was designed, but never finished, by the Duke of Buckingham, in Henry VIII.'s time.—WRIGHT.

[2] The Rev. William Holwell, vicar of Thornbury, prebendary of Exeter, and some time chaplain to the King. His 'Extracts from Mr. Pope's Translation, corresponding with the Beauties of Homer, selected from the Iliad,' were published in 1776.—WRIGHT.

Agamemnon and Achilles, and that what my servant took for oaths, were only Greek compliments. Adieu! Yours ever.

You see I have not a line more of paper.

1447. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 18, 1774.

It is very hard, that because you do not get my letters, you will not let me receive yours, who do receive them. I have not had a line from you these five weeks. Of your honours and glories fame has told me;[1] and for aught I know, you may be a *veldt-marshal* by this time, and despise such a poor cottager as me. Take notice, I shall disclaim you in my turn, if you are sent on a command against Dantzic, or to usurp a new district in Poland.[2]

I have seen no armies, kings, or empresses, and cannot send you such august gazettes; nor are they what I want to hear of. I like to hear you are well and diverted; nay, have pimped towards the latter, by desiring Lady Ailesbury to send you Monsieur de Guisnes's invitation to a military fête at Metz.[3] For my part, I wish you was returned to your plough. Your Sabine farm [Park Place] is in high beauty. I have lain there twice within this week, going to and from a visit to George Selwyn, near Gloucester: a tour as much to my taste as yours to you. For fortified towns I have seen ruined castles. Unluckily, in that of Berkeley I found a whole regiment of Militia in garrison, and as many young officers as if the Countess was in possession, and ready to surrender at indiscretion. I endeavoured to comfort myself, by figuring that they were guarding Edward II. I have seen many other ancient sights without asking leave of the King of Prussia: it would not please me so much to write *to* him, as it once did to write *for* him.[4]

They have found at least seventy thousand pounds of Lord Thomond's.[5] George Howard has decked himself with a red riband,

[1] Alluding to the distinguished notice taken of General Conway by the King of Prussia.—Walpole.

[2] The first dismemberment of Poland had taken place in the preceding year, by which a third of her territory was ceded to Russia, Austria, and Prussia.—Wright.

[3] To see the review of the French regiment of carabineers, then commanded by Monsieur de Guisnes.—Walpole.

[4] Alluding to the Letter to Rousseau in the name of the King of Prussia.—Walpole.

[5] Percy Wyndham O'Brien. He was the second son of Sir Charles Wyndham, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Queen Anne, and took the name of O'Brien, pursuant to the will of his uncle, the Earl of Thomond in Ireland.—Walpole.

money, and honours! Charming things! and yet one may be very happy without them.

The young Mr. Coke is returned from his travels in love with the Pretender's queen,[1] who has permitted him to have her picture. What can I tell you more? Nothing. Indeed, if I only write to postmasters, my letter is long enough. Everybody's head but mine is full of elections. I had the satisfaction at Gloucester, where George Selwyn is canvassing, of reflecting on my own wisdom. "Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis," &c. I am certainly the greatest philosopher in the world, without ever having thought of being so: always employed, and never busy: eager about trifles, and indifferent to everything serious. Well, if it is not philosophy, at least it is content. I am as pleased here with my own nutshell, as any monarch you have seen these two months astride his eagle—not but I was dissatisfied when I missed you at Park Place, and was peevish at your being in an Aulic chamber. Adieu! Yours ever.

P.S. They tell us from Vienna, that the peace is made between Tisiphone and the Turk: is it true?

1448. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Excuse me, but I cannot take your advice, nor intend to print any more for the public. When I offer you my press it is most selfishly, and to possess your writings, for I would only print a few copies for your friends and mine. My last volume of the 'Anecdotes of Painting' has long been finished, and as a debt shall some time or other be published, but there I take my leave of Messieurs the readers. Let Dr. Johnson please this age with the fustian of his style, and the meanness of his spirit; both are good and great enough for the taste and practice predominant. I think this country sinking fast into ruin; and when it is become an absolute monarchy and thence insignificant, I do not desire to be remembered by slaves, and in a French province. I would not be Virgil or Boileau on such conditions. Present amusement is all my object in reading, writing, or printing. To gratify the first especially, I wish to see your poem finished:

> You, who erewhile the happy garden sung,
> Continue to . . . . . sing
> Recovered Paradise! . . . .

[1] The Countess of Albany.—Wright.

I am less impatient for Gray's Life, being sure of seeing it, whether published or not: and as I conclude neither his letters nor Latin poems will be admired to the height they deserve, I am jealous of his fame, and do not like its being cast before swine. In short, I wish his and your writings to meet with a fate that not many years ago was reckoned an ignominy, that they may be sent to the colonies! for

Arts and sciences will travel west

and

The sad Nine in Britain's evil hour

will embark for America.

I have been in Gloucestershire, and can add a little to the Catalogue, having seen Berkeley Castle, Thornbury Castle, and a charming small old house of the Abbots of Gloucester. Indeed I could not enjoy the first, for the Earl was in it with all his Militia, and dispelled visions. To Wentworth Castle I shall certainly make no visit this year. If I went any journey it would be to Paris; but indolence persisting in her apprehensions of the gout, though I have had no symptoms of it for some time, will fix me here and hereabouts. I discover charms in idleness that I never had a notion of before, and perceive that age brings pleasures as well as takes away. There is a serenity in having nothing to do, that is delicious: I am persuaded that little princes assumed the title of serene highness from that sensation.

Your assured friend

HORACE LE FAINEANT.

Given at our Castle of Nonsuch, *Aug.* 23, 1774.

Salute our trusty and well-beloved The Palsgrave on our part.

1449. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Monday night, Aug. 23, 1774.

YOUR ladyship's letter did not arrive till I was gone to Goodwood, and sat here quietly till I returned to-night, for as my voyages and travels are seldom longer than a parenthesis, I never oblige my despatches to follow me. Though you do not ask, I am sure you wish to know what I heard of the Duchess of Leinster. Not a word was mentioned. Last night the Duke received a letter to tell him his niece is married to Lord Bellamont. Lady A[ilesbury] asked the Duchess of R[ichmond] about the mother. She said

they had heard the report, but did not believe it; and indeed they were all in such good spirits, that I cannot think they give any credit to the marriage.

I saw charming Lady Sarah, who is a little fatter, but as fresh and beautiful as ever: her little girl is sweetly pretty and lively. We had much billiards, music, loo, and company; I could take no part in the two first; I love most of the last, that I know, and as there were two or three children, and two or three-and-forty dogs, I could not want amusement, for I generally prefer both to what the common people call *Christians*.

I like all the account you give me, Madam, but of your nerves, and of those I don't at all despair. When Madame de Trop ceases to be the youngest of your race, I dare to say I shall love her, especially when Lady Anne begins to love her less than her brother; but, remember, a brother is the *sine quâ non* of my reconciliation.

I don't pretend to call this a letter, it is only a note, I know; but what can I tell you, Madam, from country-houses? or is anything so bad as a letter when one has really no news, and nothing particular to say?

P.S. I had sealed my letter, but open it again that your ladyship may have the freshest intelligence of the following great news—very important, at least, to my friends in France. In a postscript I have just received are these words:—

"Choses nouvelles et très certaines, M. Terray est exilé à la Motte. M. Turgot a les Finances. M. de Sartine la Marine. La Police n'est point donnée. M. le Chancelier est exilé pour trois jours à la Bruière, au bout desquels trois jours il a ordre d'aller dans une de ses terres beaucoup plus éloignées. M. de Miromenil ci-devant Premier Président de Rouen, est Garde des Sceaux, et Vice-Chancelier."—I am going to make a French bonfire.

1450. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 2, 1774.

You think I write seldom, my dear Sir, but how can I help it? Not seldomer, I hope, than in other peaceful summers. In vacations of London and Parliament, little happens weighty enough to bear so long a journey. This season has been singularly barren. Perhaps events may thicken, which, prosperous or not, are equally

propitious to correspondences. The scene in America, they say, grows very gloomy; Cæsar[1] frowns on the Elector of Hanover; but I know neither Atlantic nor German politics. *You* tell me what the Turks and Russians are to do next, but before I received your letter, I could have told you that they have agreed to do nothing more—which is much about what they have been doing all the war. Well, still one has something to live upon. The King of France has at last spoken out; both the Chancellor and Terray[2] are banished, and the old Parliament restored, or to be restored. As little as I care about the revolutions of the great planets, I am mightily pleased with this convulsion. I like old constitutions recovering themselves; and I abhorred the Chancellor, a consummate villain, who would have served Alexander VI. and Cæsar Borgia too, and wished no better than to have restored St. Ignatius and St. Nero. This young King is exceedingly in my good graces; and may gain my whole heart whenever he pleases, if he will but release Madame du Barri, for, though the tool of a vile faction, I would not be angry with a street-walker; nor make no difference between Thais and Fredegonde; between Con Phillips[3] and the Czarina.

By the way, one hears no more of my friend Pugatscheff; yet perhaps he contributed to this peace. It is now part of my plan that the King of France should dethrone that woman, and their Majesties of Prussia and Sweden, and restore Corsica—not to the Genoese, but to themselves. You may think all this a great deal, but it is not a quarter so difficult as conquering one's-self, and relinquishing despotism. It is a greater victory to make happy than miserable; but then what glorious rewards! Think, how contemptible the end of Louis the Well-beloved, how bright the dawn of Louis XVI.! Can any power taste so sweet as this single word on the statue of Henri Quatre, *Resurrexit?* And then, what a blessed retirement the Chancellor's! How he must enjoy himself, when the loss of power is sweetened with the curses of a whole nation, who have not cursed him in vain! My whole heart makes a bonfire on this occasion. What a century, which sees the Jesuits annihilated, and absolute power relinquished! I begin to believe in the Millennium, when the just shall reign on earth. I scorn to say a word more, or profane such a subject with heathen topics. Adieu!

[1] The Emperor disagreeing with the King on German politics.—Walpole.
[2] The Abbé du Terry, Comptroller-General of the Finances.—Walpole.
[3] "Con Phillips cries, a sneaking dog I hate."—*Pope.*—Cunningham.

P.S. My affection for your concerns betrays me into a weakness; I cannot help being so irreligious as to tell you, that you are to have a new neighbour, though not very soon; Lord Carlisle is to succeed Mr. Lynch at Turin.

1451. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 7, 1774.

I DID not think you had been so like the rest of the world, as, when you pretended to be visiting armies, to go in search of gold and silver mines![1] The favours of courts and the smiles of emperors and kings, I see, have corrupted even you, and perverted you to a nabob. Have you brought away an ingot in the calf of your leg? What abomination have you committed? All the gazettes in Europe have sent you on different negotiations: instead of returning with a treaty in your pocket, you will only come back with bills of exchange. I don't envy your subterraneous travels, nor the hospitality of the Hungarians. Where did you find a spoonful of Latin about you? I have not attempted to speak Latin these thirty years, without perceiving I was talking Italian thickened with terminations in *us* and *orum*. I should have as little expected to find an Ovid in those regions; but I suppose the gentry of Presburg read him for a fashionable author, as our 'squires and their wives do the last collections of ballads that have been sung at Vauxhall and Marybone. I wish you may have brought away some sketches of Duke Albert's Architecture. You know I deal in the works of Royal Authors, though I have never admired any of their own buildings, not excepting King Solomon's temple. Stanley[2] and Edmondson in Hungary! What carried them thither? The chase of mines, too? The first, perhaps, waddled thither obliquely, as a parrot would have done whose direction was to Naples.

Well, I am glad you have been entertained, and seen such a variety of sights. You don't mind fatigues and hardships, and hospitality, the two extremes that to me poison travelling. I shall never see anything more, unless I meet with a ring that renders one invisible. It was but the other day that, being with George Selwyn

[1] Mr. Conway had gone to see the gold and silver mines of Cremnitz, in the neighbourhood of Grau in Hungary.—WALPOLE.

[2] Mr. Hans Stanley.—WALPOLE.

at Gloucester, I went to view Berkeley Castle, knowing the Earl was to dine with the mayor of Gloucester. Alas! when I arrived, he had put off the party to enjoy his Militia a day longer, and the house was full of officers. They might be in the Hungarian dress, for aught I knew; for I was so dismayed, that I would fain have persuaded the housekeeper that she could not show me the apartments; and when she opened the hall, and I saw it full of captains, I hid myself in a dark passage, and nothing could persuade me to enter, till they had the civility to quit the place. When I was forced at last to go over the castle, I ran through it without seeing any thing, as if I had been afraid of being detained prisoner.

I have no news to send you: if I had any, I would not conclude, as all correspondents do, that Lady Ailesbury left nothing untold. Lady Powis is gone to hold mobs at Ludlow, where there is actual war, and where a *knight*, I forget his name, one of their friends, has been *almost cut in two* with a scythe. When you have seen all the other armies in Europe, you will be just in time for many election-battles—perhaps, for a war in America, whither more troops are going. Many of those already sent have deserted; and to be sure the prospect there is not smiling. *Apropos*, Lord Mahon,[1] whom Lord Stanhope, his father, will not suffer to wear powder because wheat is so dear, was presented t'other day in coal-black hair and a white feather: they said "he had been tarred and feathered."

In France you will find a new scene.[2] The Chancellor is sent, a little before his time, to the devil. The old Parliament is expected back. I am sorry to say I shall not meet you there. It will be too late in the year for me to venture, especially as I now live in dread of my biennial gout, and should die of it in an *hôtel garni*, and forced to receive all comers—I, who you know lock myself up when I am ill as if I had the plague.

I wish I could fill my sheet, in return for your five pages. The only thing you will care for knowing is, that I never saw Mrs. Damer [Conway's daughter] better in her life, nor look so well. You may trust me, who am so apt to be frightened about her.

[1] Charles, Viscount Mahon, born 1753; succeeded as Earl Stanhope in 1786: died 1816. He is the Citizen Stanhope of newspapers and 'Annual Registers.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] In consequence of the death of Louis XV. on the 10th of May.—WRIGHT.

1452. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

MADAM: *Strawberry Hill, Sept.* 14, 1774.

"Methinks an Æsop's fable you relate," as Dryden says in the 'Hind and Panther.' A mouse that wraps itself in a French cloak and sleeps on a couch; and a goldfinch that taps at the window and swears it will come in to quadrille at eleven o'clock at night! no, no, these are none of Æsop's cattle; they are too fashionable to have lived so near the creation. The mouse is neither Country Mouse nor City Mouse; and whatever else he may be, the goldfinch must be a Maccaroni, or at least of the *Sçavoir vivre.* I do not deny but I have some skill in expounding types and portents; and could give a shrewd guess at the identical persons who have travestied themselves into a quadruped and biped; but the truth is, I have no mind, Madam, to be Prime Minister. King Pharaoh is mighty apt on emergencies to send for us soothsayers, and put the whole kingdom into our hands, if his butler or baker, with whom he is wont to gossip, does but tell him of a cunning man.

I have no ambition to supplant Lord North—especially as the season approaches when I dread the gout; and I should be very sorry to be fetched out of my bed to pacify America. To be sure, Madam, you give me a fair field for uttering oracles: however, all I will unfold is, that the emblematic animals have no views on Lady Louisa.[1] The omens of her fortune are in herself; and I will burn my books, if beauty, sense, and merit, do not bestow all the happiness on her they prognosticate.

I can as little agree to the Duchess of M.'s solution of the Duchess of L.'s marriage, which, by the way, is at least not over yet. Nor do I believe, *whatever mamma knows,* that she will agree to it either; and, for this reason, the efficacy of pregnancy on a delicate constitution is no lasting nostrum. A husband would be but a temporary preservative, and useless, when the operations of the remedy could not possibly be of any service. Alas! is a poor sick lady to leave off the drug when it can no longer produce the wholesome tumour on the patient!

I doubt the Duchess of M. did not advert to the vicinity of that

[1] Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick, Lord Ossory's sister, afterwards married to the Earl of Shelburne, the mother of the present Marquis of Lansdowne.—R. VERNON SMITH.

hopeless season in the Duchess of L., or I think her Grace would not have laid down a position from which such disagreeable consequences might be drawn.

I like the blue eyes, Madam, better than the denomination of Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick, which, all respectable as it is, is very harsh and rough sounding; pray let her change it with the first goldfinch that offers. Nay, I do not even trust to the blueth of the eyes. I do not believe they last once in twenty times. One cannot go into any village fifty miles from London without seeing a dozen little children with flaxen hair and eyes of sky-blue. What becomes of them all? One does not see a grown Christian with them twice in a century, except in poetry.

The Strawberry Gazette is very barren of news. Mr. Garrick has the gout, which is of more consequence to the metropolis than to Twitnamshire. Lady Hertford dined here last Saturday, brought her loo party and stayed supper; there were Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Howe, and the Colonels Maude and Keene. This was very heroic, for one is robbed every hundred yards. Lady Hertford herself was attacked last Wednesday on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon, but she had two servants on horseback, who would not let her be robbed, and the highwayman decamped.

The greatest event I know was a present I received last Sunday, just as I was going to dine at Lady Blandford's, to whom I sacrificed it. It was a bunch of grapes as big—as big—as that the two spies carried on a pole to Joshua; for spies in those days, when they robbed a vineyard, were not at all afraid of being overtaken. In good truth this bunch weighed three pounds and a half, *cote rotie* measure; and was sent to me by my neighbour Prado, of the tribe of Issachar, who is descended from one of foresaid spies, but a good deal richer than his ancestor. Well, Madam, I carried it to the Marchioness [of Blandford], but gave it to the *maître d'hotel*, with injunctions to conceal it till the dessert. At the end of dinner, Lady Blandford said, she had heard of three immense bunches of grapes at Mr. Prado's at a dinner he had made for Mr. [Welbore] Ellis. I said those things were always exaggerated. She cried, oh! but Mrs. Ellis told it, and it weighed I don't know how many pounds, and the Duke of Argyle had been to see the hothouse, and she wondered, as it was so near, I would not go and see it. Not I, indeed, said I; I dare to say there is no curiosity in it. Just then entered the gigantic bunch. Everybody screamed. There, said I, I will be shot if Mr. Prado has such a bunch as yours. In short,

she suspected Lady Egremont, and the adventure succeeded to admiration. If you will send the Bedfordshire waggon, Madam, I will beg a dozen grapes for you.

Mr. Barker may pretend what he will, but if he liked Strawberry Hill so well, he would have visited it again, and by daylight. He could see no more of it at nine o'clock at night than he does at this moment.

Pray, Madam, is not it Farming-Woods' tide?[1] Who is to have the care of the dear mouse in your absence? I wish I could spare Margaret [his housekeeper], who loves all creatures so well that she would have been happy in the Ark, and sorry when the Deluge ceased; unless people had come to see Noah's old house, which she would have liked still better than cramming his menagerie.

Postscript, *entre nous*. Have you heard that certain verses have been read inadvertently to the D. of Gr[afton]? I long to know, but cannot learn who was the ingenious person.

1453. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 16, 1774.

What is the commonest thing in the world?—Lord! how can you be so dull as not to guess? why to be sure, to hunt for a thing forty times, and give it over, and then find it when you did not look for it, exactly where you had hunted forty times. This happened to me this very morning, and overjoyed I am. I suppose you don't guess what I have found? Really, Mr. Mason, you great poets are so absent, and so unlike the rest of the world! Why what should I have found,[2] but the thing in the world that was most worth finding? a hidden treasure—a hidden fig; no, Sir, not the certificate of the Duchess of Kingston's first marriage, nor the lost books of Livy, nor the longitude, nor the philosopher's stone, nor all Charles Fox has lost. I tell you it is, what I have searched for a thousand times, and had rather have found than the longitude, if it was a thousand times longer. Oh! you do guess, do you? I thought I

[1] The period of the year when Lady Ossory left Ampthill for Farming Woods.—R. Vernon Smith.

[2] The lines on Jemmy Twitcher (Lord Sandwich) printed under the title of the 'Candidate, or the Cambridge Courtship.' See Gray's Poems, Ed. Ald. p. 163.—Mitford.

never lost any thing in my life. I was sure I had them, and so I had; and now am I not a good soul, to sit down and send you a copy incontinently? Don't be too much obliged to me neither. I am in a panic till there are more copies than mine, and as the post does not go till to-morrow, I am in terror lest the house should be burnt to-night. I have a mind to go and bury a transcript in the field; but then if I should be burnt too! nobody would know where to look for it. Well, here it is! I think your decorum will not hold it proper to be printed in the Life, nor would I have it. We will preserve copies, and the devil is in it, if some time or other it don't find its way to the press. My copy is in his own handwriting; but who could doubt it: I know but one man upon earth who could have written it but Gray.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Oct. 2, 1774.

I MAY be ashamed of myself, and in sober sadness am horribly ashamed of myself, for having neglected to answer your two last letters. But I know not how it is, I grow as lazy, as lolloping as —— a king, and as little inclined to keep on good terms with my correspondents, as he with his subjects. After making a simile so humiliating to myself, and feeling as Mr. Anstey has it, *the conscious blush of self-condemning* —not *praise*, but *truth*, I hope you will acquit me without further apology.

A million of thanks to you for finding and sending what you have found and sent. The couplet which you wish me to alter,[2] is one of those that can only be altered, not improved; the utmost one can hope is a passable alteration. However, I think with you, and always did, that the lines ought to be altered. I read somewhat nearer his idea than yours

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

The rhymes here are not quite perfect, yet, in this sort of verse, I believe they are permissible. I remember when he repeated them to me (for I never before saw them in writing) that the epithet in the fourth line was *awkward* society, which I think better than *harmless*. I have been occupied of late in filling up those chasms in the Memoirs which the cancelled pages required. I hope I have made them more innocent, but you shall see the whole when it is printed, and have as many more cancels as you please, whatever pains it costs me; for as to obstinacy and self-will, I flatter myself I am not similar to any great personage in the universe: 'tis the passive, not the active vices of majesty that I emulate.

A relation of mine now abroad has sent me an Italian translation of 'Elfrida,' lately published at Florence by the Abbé Pillori. I am not sufficiently master of the language to know whether it be well or ill done, but it flatters me much to find it dedicated to Lord Mansfield's nephew, my Lord Stormont. It seems the Abbé is now about 'Caractacus:' I hope he will dedicate it to Lord Mansfield himself.

At last the fate of 'Aston' is decided, and my Nabob cousin[3] is in the possession of the house, manor, &c., and last night the boys of the village having dragged a cart of coals from the pits, made a bonfire on the occasion. This goodly estate, which

[2] The concluding couplet of Gray's satirical verses on Lord Sandwich.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Mr. Verelst purchased a large portion of Lord Holdernesse's estate at Aston, part of which is still [1851] in possession of his family.—MITFORD.

1454. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

I HAVE not imitated your silence from irony, but convenience,—not from want of forgiveness, but of matter. In a time of general elections I have no more ideas than in Newmarket season, when everybody is talking of matches and bets. I do not know who has been distanced, or thrown, or won a cup. I have only observed in the papers, that Lord John has been hard run, though he has got the plate; and as the race was at York, I suppose you was on the course. The new Senate, they tell me, will be a curious assemblage of patricians and plebeians and knights—of the post. An *old clothes man*, who, George Selwyn says, certainly stood for *Monmouth*, was a candidate, but unsuccessful. Bob,[1] formerly a waiter at White's, was set up by my nephew for two boroughs, and actually is returned for Castle Rising with Mr. Wedderburn;

Servus curru portatur eodem;

which I suppose will offend the Scottish Consul, as much as his countrymen resent an Irishman standing for Westminster, which the former reckon a borough of their own. For my part, waiter for waiter, I see little difference; they are all equally ready to cry, "Coming, coming, Sir."

I have heard nothing but what you tell me of Johnson's detection, nor shall believe it till I see it. I have been likewise told that Macpherson is to publish the papers of James II., and detect Sir John Dalrymple. *Credat Judæus!* Is that house so divided against itself? I should have as soon believed Lord Mansfield had been

came into the D'Arcy family by marriage with a heiress of the Meltons (Temp. Prin. Eliz.) now goes from it, because a Scots quarter-master (Steward to the Duke of Leeds) would not suffer him to redeem it. Take physic, Pomp!

As I see nothing new in the book way for ages after publication, I beg you will give me some account of Dr. Johnson's Tour in Scotland, when it is published. You will perhaps wonder at my curiosity, but I have heard he has gone far in detecting Macpherson's plagiaries with respect to Ossian, and 'tis on this account only that I want to be informed about it. Pray tell me how this horrid rainy season agrees with you, and whether you do not repent your not having gone into France with Lord Mansfield, merely for better weather. Believe me to be, dear Sir, both in rain and sunshine, most faithfully yours,

W. MASON.

[1] Robert Macreth (afterwards knighted). See a good epigram upon him in a letter from Walpole to Mason of 1 Nov. 1780.—CUNNINGHAM.

to Paris for materials to prove the Assassination Plot. Really, Mr. Mason, you people who live in the country are strangely credulous! We are ignorant enough at Twickenham, *mais point jusqu'à ce point là.*

Your Life may as well have patience a little longer still. If it comes out in the midst of contested elections, flatter yourself as much as you will, no soul will read it. Alas, Sir! the history of a dead poet will make no more impression now than the battle of Agincourt. If you can tell us any news of the assembly of the Colonies, we shall listen to you with avidity. If you have any private intelligence that Boston is levelled to the ground, and sown with salt, better and better; but, dear Sir, Mr. Gray never set his foot in the Massachusetts. He and Pindar might sing very pretty catches for aught we know, but nobody cares about such things now-a-days. You lose your time, indeed you do. The Belles Lettres were in fashion once, and so were fardingales. But this is a grave nation, and soon grows weary of trifles. For one while we were mad about commerce, but that bubble is over too. We have at last found out that fleets do more good by destroying trade than by protecting it; for if we have no trade, we are not vulnerable by an enemy. Spain enjoys Peru and Mexico by extirpating the inhabitants. She found that her natives migrated thither. What did she do? Laid waste the New World; and the Spaniards staid at home—to be sure; and we are going to be as wise. I wish you would turn your mind to these things as I do. There is some good in fathoming the arcana of Government, but Poetry and writing Lives is an occupation only fit for a school-boy,—

> Non sic fortis Etruria crevit,
> Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.

No, she conquered the world and plundered her provinces, and then was blest with those demigods, Caligula, Domitian, and Heliogabalus, who were always sent to heaven as soon as they were ripe for it. Adieu!

1455. TO JOHN CRAWFURD, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 26, 1774.

You tell me to write to you, and I am certainly disposed to do anything I can to amuse you; but that is not so easy a matter, for two very good reasons: you are not the most amusable of men, and I have nothing to amuse you with, for you are like electricity, you attract and repel at once; and though you have at first a mind to know any thing, you are tired of it before it can be told. I don't go to Almack's nor amongst your acquaintance. Would you bear to hear of mine? of Lady Blandford, Lady Anne Conolly, and the Duchess of Newcastle? for by age and situation at this time of the year I live with nothing but old women. They do very well for me who have little choice left, and who rather prefer common nonsense to wise nonsense—the only difference I know between old women and old men. I am out of all politics, and never think of elections, which I think I should hate even if I loved politics; just as if I loved tapestry I do not think I could talk over the manufacture of worsteds. Books I have almost done with too; at least, read only such as nobody else would read. In short, my way of life is too insipid to entertain any body but myself, and though I am always employed, I must own I think I have given up everything in the world only to be busy about the most arrant trifles.

Well, I have made out half a letter with a history very like the journal in the 'Spectator,' of the man, the chief incidents of whose life were stroking his cat, and walking to Hampstead. Last night, indeed, I had an adventure that would make a great figure in such a narrative. *You* may be enjoying bright suns and serene horizons

[1] Now first published. By the address on the letter, Crawfurd was now in Scotland, at Paisley. "Crawfurd was an early acquaintance and associate of Mr. Fox. He was a man of parts and vivacity, had been a favourite with Voltaire, and lived to be the friend of Calonne. He was well known in the fashionable world, where his curious and prying disposition procured him the nickname of *the Fish*, by which he was habitually designated in Society. He sat in several Parliaments, and once he attempted to speak. Of his failure on that occasion he gives a sprightly account in a letter to Ste. Fox."—*Lord John Russell's Fox*, i. 81. He seems to have been very affected. Lord Holland used to relate that on some occasion Lord Egremont hearing at a dinner party of the death of a friend, burst into tears and was obliged to leave the room. While every one pitied him, Mr. Crawfurd said testily, "If *I* hear of the death of a friend, *I* burst into tears, and if *I* am overcome, *I* leave the room."—*Lord John Russell's Fox*, i. 34.—CUNNINGHAM.

under the pole, but in this dismal southern region it has rained for this month without interruption. Lady Browne and I dined as usual on Sundays with Lady Blandford. Our gentle Thames was swelled in the morning to a very respectable magnitude, and we had thought of returning by Kew Bridge; however, I persuaded her to try if we could not ferry, and when we came to the foot of the hill, the bargemen told us the water was sunk. We embarked and had four men to push the ferry. The night was very dark, for though the moon was up, we could neither see her, nor she us. The bargemen were drunk, the poles would scarce reach the bottom, and in five minutes the rapidity of the current turned the barge round, and in an instant we were at Isleworth. The drunkenest of the men cried out, She is gone, she is lost! meaning they had lost the management. Lady Browne fell into an agony, began screaming and praying to Jesus, and every land and water god and goddess, and I who expected not to stop till we should run against Kew-bridge, was contriving how I should get home; or what was worse, whether I must not step into some mud up to my middle, be wet through, and get the gout. With much ado they recovered the barge and turned it; but then we ran against the piles of the new bridge, which startled the horses, who began kicking. My Phillis's terrors increased, and I thought every minute she would have begun confession. Thank you, you need not be uneasy; in ten minutes we landed very safely, and if we had been drowned, I am too exact not to have dated my letter from the bottom of the Thames. There! there's a letter; I think you would not wish to read such another, even if written to somebody else.

Yours ever,

H. W.

P.S. Pontdevelde is dead, and our friend fancies she is more sorry than she fancied she should be! but it will make a vacuum in her room rather than in her entertainment.

Arlington Street, Sept. 29.

This letter, which should have gone two days ago, but I had no direction, will come untimely, for you will be up to the ears in your canvass,[1] as the parliament is to be dissolved the day after to-morrow.

[1] Mr. Crawfurd sat for Renfrewshire.—CUNNINGHAM.

1456. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1774.

I SHOULD be very ungrateful indeed if I thought of complaining of you, who are goodness itself to me: and when I did not receive letters from you, I concluded it happened from your eccentric positions. I am amazed, that, hurried as you have been, and your eyes and thoughts crowded with objects, you have been able to find time to write me so many and such long letters, over and above all those to Lady Ailesbury, your daughter [Mrs. Damer], brother [Lord Hertford], and other friends. Even Lord Strafford brags of your frequent remembrance. That your superabundance of royal beams would dazzle you, I never suspected. Even I enjoy for you the distinctions you have received—though I should hate such things for myself, as they are particularly troublesome to me, and I am particularly awkward under them, and as I abhor the King of Prussia, and, if I passed through Berlin, should have no joy like avoiding him—like one of our countrymen, who changed horses at Paris, and asked what the name of that town was? All the other civilities you have received I am perfectly happy in. The Germans are certainly a civil, well-meaning people, and, I believe, one of the least corrupted nations in Europe. I don't think them very agreeable; but who do I think are so? A great many French women, some English men, and a few English women; exceedingly few French men. Italian women are the grossest, vulgarest of the sex. If an Italian man has a grain of sense, he is a buffoon. So much for Europe!

I have already told you, and so must Lady Ailesbury, that my courage fails me, and I dare not meet you at Paris. As the period is arrived when the gout used to come, it is never a moment out of my head. Such a suffering, such a helpless condition as I was in for five months and a half, two years ago, makes me tremble from head to foot. I should die at once if seized in a French inn; or what, if possible, would be worse, at Paris, where I must admit everybody—I, who you know can hardly bear to see even you when I am ill, and who shut up myself here, and would not let Lord and Lady Hertford come near me—I, who have my room washed though in bed, how could I bear French dirt? In short, I, who am so capricious, and whom you are pleased to call a philosopher, I

suppose because I have given up everything but my own will—how could I keep my temper, who have no way of keeping my temper but by keeping it out of everybody's way! No, I must give up the satisfaction of being with you at Paris. I have just learnt to give up my pleasures, but I cannot give up my pains, which such selfish people as I, who have suffered much, grow to compose into a system that they are partial to, because it is their own. I must make myself amends when you return: you will be more stationary, I hope, for the future; and if I live I shall have intervals of health. In lieu of me, you will have a charming succedaneum, Lady Harriet Stanhope.[1] Her father, who is more a hero than I, is packing up his decrepit bones, and goes too. I wish she may not have him to nurse, instead of diverting herself.

The present state of your country is, that it is drowned and dead drunk; all water without, and wine within. Opposition for the next elections everywhere, even in Scotland; not from party, but as laying out money to advantage. In the head-quarters, indeed, party is not out of the question: the day after to-morrow will be a great bustle in the City for a Lord Mayor,[2] and all the winter in Westminster, where Lord Mahon and Humphrey Cotes oppose the Court. Lady Powis is saving her money at Ludlow and Powis Castles by keeping open house day and night against Sir Watkin Williams, and fears she shall be kept there till the general election. It has rained this whole month, and we have got another inundation. The Thames is as broad as your Danube, and all my meadows are under water. Lady Browne and I, coming last Sunday night from Lady Blandford's, were in a piteous plight. The ferry-boat [at Richmond] was turned round by the current, and carried to Isleworth. Then we ran against the piers of our new bridge[3] [at Richmond], and the horses were frightened. Luckily, my *cicisbeo* was a Catholic, and screamed to so many saints, that some of them at the nearest ale-house came and saved us, or I should have had no more gout, or what I dreaded I should; for I concluded we should be carried ashore somewhere, and be forced to wade through the mud up to my middle. So you see one may wrap oneself up in flannel and be in danger, without visiting all the armies on the face of the globe, and putting the immortality of one's chaise to the proof.

[1] Daughter of the Earl of Harrington. Her ladyship was married, in 1776, to Thomas, second Lord Foley.—Wright.

[2] When Mr. Wilkes was elected.—Walpole.

[3] The present bridge, begun 1774, finished 1777.—Cunningham.

I am ashamed of sending you but three sides of smaller paper in answer to seven large—but what can I do? I see nothing, know nothing, do nothing. My castle is finished, I have nothing new to read, I am tired of writing, I have no new or old bit for my printer. I have only black hoods around me; or, if I go to town, the family party in Grosvenor-street.[1] One trait will give you a sample of how I passed my time, and made me laugh, as it put me in mind of you; at least it was a fit of absence, much more likely to have happened to you than to me. I was playing at eighteenpenny tredrille with the Duchess of Newcastle[2] and Lady Browne, and certainly not much interested in the game. I cannot recollect nor conceive what I was thinking of, but I pushed the cards very gravely to the Duchess, and said, "*Doctor*, you are to deal." You may guess at their astonishment, and how much it made us all laugh. I wish it may make you smile a moment, or that I had anything better to send you. Adieu, most affectionately. Yours ever.

1457. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1774.

Lady Ailesbury brings you this,[3] which is not a letter, but a paper of directions, and the counterpart of what I have written to Madame du Deffand. I beg of you seriously to take a great deal of notice of this dear old friend of mine. She will, perhaps, expect more attention from *you*, as my friend, and as it is her own nature a little, than will be quite convenient to you: but you have an infinite deal of patience and good-nature, and will excuse it. I was afraid of her importuning Lady Ailesbury, who has a vast deal to see and do, and, therefore, I have prepared Madame du Deffand, and told her Lady Ailesbury loves amusements, and that, having never been at Paris before, she must not confine her: so you must pay for

[1] The Churchills in Grosvenor-street, the house which Churchill inherited from his mother, Mrs. Oldfield, the actress.—Cunningham.

[2] Catherine, eldest daughter and heiress of the Right Hon. Henry Pelham [First-Minister], married to Henry ninth Earl of Lincoln; who, in consequence of his marriage with her, inherited, in 1768, the dukedom of Newcastle-under-Line, on the demise of the Countess's uncle, Thomas Pelham Holles, who had been created, in 1756, Duke of Newcastle-under-Line, with special remainder to the Earl of Lincoln.—Wright.

[3] Mr. Conway ended his military tour at Paris; whither Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer went to meet him, and where they spent the winter together.—Walpole.

both—and it will answer: and I do not, I own, ask this only for Madame du Deffand's sake, but for my own, and a little for yours. Since the late King's [Louis XV.] death she has not dared to write to me freely, and I want to know the present state of France exactly, both to satisfy my own curiosity, and for her sake, as I wish to learn whether her pension, &c. is in any danger from the present ministry, some of whom are not her friends. She can tell you a great deal if she will—by that I don't mean that she is reserved, or partial to her own country against ours—quite the contrary; she loves me better than all France together—but she hates politics: and therefore, to make her talk on it, you must tell her it is to satisfy me, and that I want to know whether she is well at Court, whether she has any fears from the government, particularly from Maurepas and Nivernois: and that I am eager to have Monsieur de Choiseul and *ma grandmaman*, the Duchess, restored to power. If you take it on this foot easily, she will talk to you with the utmost frankness and with amazing cleverness. I have told her you are strangely absent, and that, if she does not repeat it over and over, you will forget every syllable: so I have prepared her to joke and be quite familiar with you at once.[1] She knows more of personal characters, and paints them better, than anybody: but let this be between ourselves, for I would not have a living soul suspect that I get any intelligence from her, which would hurt her; and, therefore, I beg you not to let any human being know of this letter, nor of your conversation with her, neither English nor French.

Madame du Deffand hates *les philosophes;* so you must give them up to her. She and Madame Geoffrin are no friends: so, if you go thither, don't tell her of it. Indeed you would be sick of that house, whither all the pretended *beaux esprits* and *faux savants* go, and where they are very impertinent and dogmatic.

Let me give you one other caution, which I shall give Lady Ailesbury too. Take care of your papers at Paris, and have a very strong lock to your *porte-feuille*. In the *hôtels garnis* they have double keys to every lock, and examine every drawer and paper of the English they can get at. They will pilfer, too, whatever they

[1] In her letter to Walpole, of the 28th of October, Madame du Deffand draws the following portrait of General Conway—"Selon l'idée que vous m'en aviez donnée, je le croyais grave, sévère, froid, imposant; c'est l'homme le plus aimable, le plus facile, le plus doux, le plus obligeant, et le plus simple que je connaisse. Il n'a pas ces premiers mouvemens de sensibilité qu'on trouve en vous, mais aussi n'a-t-il pas votre humeur."—WRIGHT.

can. I was robbed of half my clothes there the first time, and they wanted to hang poor Louis [his Swiss servant] to save the people of the house who had stolen the things.

Here is another thing I must say. Madame du Deffand has kept a great many of my letters, and, as she is very old, I am in pain about them. I have written to her to beg she will deliver them up to you to bring back to me, and I trust she will.[1] If she does, be so good to take great care of them. If she does not mention them, tell her just before you come away, that I begged you to bring them; and if she hesitates, convince her how it would hurt me to have letters written in very bad French, and mentioning several people, both French and English, fall into bad hands, and, perhaps, be printed.

Let me desire you to read this letter more than once, that you may not forget my requests, which are very important to me; and I must give you one other caution, without which all would be useless. There is at Paris a Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse,[2] a pretended *bel esprit*, who was formerly an humble companion of Madame du Deffand; and betrayed her and used her very ill. I beg of you not to let anybody carry you thither. It would disoblige my friend of all things in the world, and she would never tell you a syllable; and I own it would hurt me, who have such infinite obligations to her, that I should be very unhappy, if a particular friend of mine showed her this disregard. She has done everything upon earth to please and serve me, and I owe it to her to be earnest about this attention. Pray do not mention it; it might look simple in me, and yet I owe it to her, as I know it would hurt her: and, at her age, with her misfortunes, and with infinite obligations on my side, can I do too much to show my gratitude, or prevent her any new mortification? I dwell upon it, because she has some

[1] To this request Madame du Deffand replied—"Je ne me flatte point de vous revoir l'année prochaine, et le renvoi que vous voulez que je vous fasse de vos lettres est ce qui m'en fait douter. Ne serait-il pas plus naturel, si vous deviez venir, que je vous les rendisse à vous-même? car vous ne pensez pas que je ne puisse vivre encore un an. Vous me faites croire, par votre méfiance, que vous avez en vue d'effacer toute trace de votre intelligence avec moi."—WRIGHT.

[2] Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse, the friend of D'Alembert, born at Lyons in 1732, was the natural child of Mademoiselle d'Albon, whose legitimate daughter was married to the Marquis de Vichy. After the death of her mother, she resided with Monsieur and Madame de Vichy; but in consequence of some disagreements, left them, and in May 1754 went to reside with Madame du Deffand, with whom she remained until 1764. The letters of Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse were published some few years since.—WRIGHT.

enemies so spiteful that they try to carry all English to Mademoiselle de l'Espinasse.

I wish the Duchess of Choiseul may come to Paris while you are there; but I fear she will not; you would like her of all things. She has more sense and more virtues than almost any human being. If you choose to see any of the *savans*, let me recommend Monsieur Buffon. He has not only much more sense than any of them, but is an excellent old man, humane, gentle, well-bred, and with none of the arrogant pertness of all the rest. If he is at Paris, you will see a good deal of the Comte de Broglie at Madame du Deffand's. He is not a genius of the first water, but lively and sometimes agreeable. The Court, I fear, will be at Fontainbleau, which will prevent your seeing many, unless you go thither. Adieu! at Paris! I leave the rest of my paper for England, if I happen to have anything particular to tell you.

1458. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 6, 1774.

It would be unlike my attention and punctuality, to see so large an event as an irregular dissolution of Parliament, without taking any notice of it to you. It happened last Saturday, six months before its natural death, and without the design being known but the Tuesday before, and that by very few persons. The chief motive is supposed to be the ugly state of North America, and the effects that a cross winter might have on the next elections. Whatever were the causes, the first consequences, as you may guess, were such a ferment in London as is seldom seen at this dead season of the year. Couriers, despatches, post-chaises, post-horses, hurrying every way! Sixty messengers passed through one single turnpike on Friday. The whole island is by this time in equal agitation; but less wine and money will be shed than have been at any such period for these fifty years.

We have a new famous bill, devised by the late Mr. Grenville, that has its first operation now; and what changes it may occasion, nobody can yet foresee. The first symptoms are not favourable to the Court; the great towns are casting off submission, and declaring for popular members. London, Westminster, Middlesex, seem to have no monarch but Wilkes, who is at the same time pushing for the Mayoralty of London, with hitherto a majority on the poll. It

is strange how this man, like a phœnix, always revives from his embers! America, I doubt, is still more unpromising. There are whispers of their having assembled an armed force, and of earnest supplications arrived for succours of men and ships. A civil war is no trifle; and how we are to suppress or pursue in such a vast region, with a handful of men, I am not an Alexander to guess; and for the fleet, can we put it upon casters and wheel it from Hudson's Bay to Florida? But I am an ignorant soul, and neither pretend to knowledge nor foreknowledge. All I perceive already is, that our Parliaments are subjected to America and India, and must be influenced by their politics; yet I do not believe our senators are more universal than formerly.

It would be quite unfashionable to talk longer of anything but elections; and yet it is the topic on which I never talk or think, especially since *I took up my freedom*.[1] In one light I can speak of them. The whole world has been so good for these six months as to believe my nephew quite in his senses. It was very far from being *my* opinion. You shall judge yourself. Lady Orford had given him power over her boroughs. The moment her agent heard of the dissolution, he sent two expresses, one after the other, to my lord. He has not deigned to send any answer or give any orders, except despatching Mr. Skreene to one of them. Mr. Boone, his candidate for the other, is in bed with the gout; and though there is a clear majority of three voices at one, Mr. Sharpe thinks he will lose both by his improvidence.

In the midst of this combustion, we are in perils by land and water. It has rained for this month without intermission; there is a sea between me and Richmond, and Sunday was se'nnight I was hurried down to Isleworth in the ferryboat by the violence of the current, and had great difficulty to get to shore. Our roads are so infested by highwaymen, that it is dangerous stirring out almost by day. Lady Hertford was attacked on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon. Dr. Eliot was shot at three days ago, without having resisted; and the day before yesterday we were near losing our Prime Minister, Lord North; the robbers shot at the postilion, and wounded the latter. In short, all the freebooters, that are not in India, have taken to the highway. The Ladies of the Bedchamber dare not go to the Queen at Kew in an evening. The lane between me and the Thames is the only safe road I know at present, for it

[1] His quitting Parliament.—Walpole.

is up to the middle of the horses in water. Next week I shall not venture to London even at noon, for the Middlesex election is to be at Brentford, where the two demagogues, Wilkes and Townshend, oppose each other; and at Richmond there is no crossing the river. How strange all this must appear to you Florentines; but you may turn to your Machiavelli and Guicciardini, and have some idea of it. I am the quietest man at present in the whole island; not but I might take some part, if I would. I was in my garden yesterday, seeing my servants lop some trees; my brewer walked in and pressed me to go to Guildhall for the nomination of members for the county. I replied, calmly, "Sir, when I would go no more to my own election, you may be very sure I will go to that of nobody else." My old tune is,

Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis, &c.

Adieu!

P.S. Arlington Street, 7th.

I am just come to town, and find your letter, with the notification of Lord Cowper's marriage;[1] I recollect that I ought to be sorry for it, as you will probably lose an old friend. The approaching death of the Pope will be an event of no consequence. That old mummery is near its conclusion, at least as a political object. The history of the latter Popes will be no more read than that of the last Constantinopolitan Emperors. Wilkes is a more conspicuous personage in modern story than the Pontifex Maximus of Rome. The poll for Lord Mayor ended last night; he and his late Mayor had above 1900 votes, and their antagonists not 1500. It is strange that the more he is opposed, the more he succeeds!

I don't know whether Sir W. Duncan's marriage proved Platonic or not; but I cannot believe that a lady of great birth,[2] and greater pride, quarrels with her family, to marry a Scotch physician for Platonic love, which she might enjoy without marriage. I remember an admirable *bon-mot* of George Selwyn; who said, "How often Lady Mary will repeat, with Macbeth, 'Wake, Duncan, with this knocking—would thou couldst!'"

[1] See vol. iv. p. 221.—Cunningham.

[2] Lady Mary Tufton, sister of the Earl of Thanet.—Walpole.

1459. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

DEAR SIR: *Strawberry Hill, Oct.* 11, 1774.

I ANSWER yours immediately; as one pays a shilling to clench a bargain, when one suspects the seller. I accept your visit in the last week of this month, and will prosecute you if you do not execute. I have nothing to say about elections, but that I congratulate myself every time I feel I have nothing to do with them. By my nephew's [Lord Orford's] strange conduct about his boroughs, and by many other reasons, I doubt whether he is so well as he seemed to Dr. Barnardiston. It is a subject I do not love to talk on; but I know I tremble every time the bell rings at my gate at an unusual hour.

Have you seen Mr. Granger's Supplement? Methinks it grows too diffuse. I have hinted to him that fewer panegyrics from funeral sermons would not hurt it. Adieu!

1460. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 15, 1774.

WHY, Madam, you are a Proteus in petticoats, and every day appear in some new character! Three days ago you was setting out ambassadress to Spain: to-day you are agent for Mr. Ongley, and carrying a county election. Next week I suppose you will set out for Rome and make a Pope. I am sorry to put you in mind of an old observation, that they who attempt everything, seldom are at the head of anything. You will not be the most conspicuous of ambassadresses, unless you go in your own right, as the Maréchale de Guébriant was sent to Poland without her husband. You will not be the first of electresses, unless you sit on the hustings like the Duchess of Northumberland. As to going to Madrid without Lord Ossory, you would not dislike it, if it was only to disappoint me of a son and heir; but let me see you in the porch of Bedford Church, clapping Tom and John on the back, and tossing up a diamond cap in a huzza! Seriously, I should be very unhappy if I believed in your embassy, but as *we were assured of it on creditable authority* I was very little frightened, besides some private reasons of my own for doubting. It was not from your ladyship's silence. The corps

diplomatique I know keep secrets even after they have been in the Gazette, and were I impertinent enough to ask the question, to be sure you would answer like the Tuscan Envoy on Cromwell's death, "Some say we are to go to Spain, some say we are not; for my part I believe neither one nor t'other."

You ask me, Madam, what *I* am doing? As I have no public character nor am tied to any mystery, I can answer very explicitly, what I generally am doing, laughing at everybody else. I have escaped the two things I hate and dread the most, Parliament and the gout; the first, as I told you in my last, might have happened *now*, in spite of my teeth, if my nephew had continued as bad as he was; the last I feared I should have had before this time, but *my reckoning was out last night*, and I have now great confidence in the bootikins for keeping it off.

I sing Io Pæan to Apollo, as god of medicine, for putting off both my nephew's fit and mine, and give a loose to my spirits by diverting myself with all you who are over head and ears in elections, while I am enjoying the sunshine of October, and see even the horse-chestnuts in full leaf; but I beg your ladyship's pardon, what care you what I man does who has not a freehold in the world?

What an insignificant being! and the old fool pretends to be happy! I own it is very insolent at fifty-eight to be even contented; but what can I do, Madam? If I had any misfortunes, I should consider how short a time they could last; and the gout itself, about which I own I am no stoic, must be cured, or deliver me for ever. Not that I am like poor Lord Holland, and wish to die. I like life extremely, if I hold it on no worse terms. I am not likely to play the fool myself, and one may trust that there are enough that will, to keep one in diversion. It is all the ill-will I have to the world; and as I have too much sense to think of curing anybody, I hope it is a very innocent amusement to sit in my own room and smile,—I mean for anybody but a Spanish ambassadress. What difficulty I should have, if I lived to your return, to compose my face to becoming gravity; and if I heard you ring and order your Majordomo to call Lady Anne's Duenna! I would try to behave as properly as if you made me

Your Excellency's, &c., &c.,

The Governor of Barataria.

1461. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday, Oct. 16, 1774.

I RECEIVED this morning your letter of the 6th from Strasburg; and before you get this you will have had three from me by Lady Ailesbury. One of them should have reached you much sooner; but Lady Ailesbury kept it, not being sure where you was. It was in answer to one in which you told me an anecdote, which in this last you ask if I had received.

Your letters are always so welcome to me, that you certainly have no occasion for excusing what you say or do not say. Your details amuse me, and so would what you suppress; for, though I have no military genius or curiosity, whatever relates to yourself must interest me. The honours you have received, though I have so little taste for such things myself, gave me great satisfaction; and I do not know whether there is not more pleasure in *not* being a prophet in one's own country, when one is almost received like Mahomet in every other. To be an idol at home, is no assured touchstone of merit. Stocks and stones have been adored in fifty regions, but do not bear transplanting. The Apollo Belvidere and the Hercules Farnese may lose their temples, but never lose their estimation, by travelling.

Elections, you may be sure, are the only topic here at present—I mean in England—not on this quiet hill, where I think of them as little as of the spot where the battle of Blenheim was fought. They say there will not be much alteration, but the Phœnix will rise from its ashes with most of its old plumes, or as bright. Wilkes at first seemed to carry all before him, besides having obtained the mayoralty of London at last. Lady Hertford told me last Sunday, that he would carry twelve members. I have not been in town since, nor know anything but what I collect from the papers; so, if my letter is opened, M. de Vergennes will not amass any very authentic intelligence from my dispatches.

What I have taken notice of, is as follows: For the City Wilkes will have but three members: he will lose Crosby, and Townsend will carry Oliver. In Westminster, Wilkes will not have one; his Humphrey Cotes is by far the lowest on the poll; Lord Percy and Lord T. Clinton are triumphant there. Her grace of Northumberland sits at a window in Covent-garden, harangues the mob,

and is "Hail, fellow, well met!" At Dover, Wilkes has carried one, and probably will come in for Middlesex himself with Glynn. There have been great endeavours to oppose him, but to no purpose. Of this I am glad, for I do not love a mob so near as Brentford; especially as my road [to London] lies through it. Where he has any other interest I am too ignorant in these matters to tell you. Lord John Cavendish is opposed at York, and at the beginning of the poll had the fewest numbers. Charles Fox, like the Ghost in 'Hamlet,' has shifted to many quarters; but in most the cock crew, and he walked off.[1] In Southwark there has been outrageous rioting; but I neither know the candidates, their connexions, nor success. This, perhaps, will appear a great deal of news at Paris: here, I dare to say, my butcher knows more.

I can tell you still less of America. There are two or three more ships with forces going thither, and Sir William Draper as second in command.

Of private news, except that Dyson[2] has had a stroke of palsy and will die, there is certainly none; for I saw that shrill Morning Post, Lady Greenwich, two hours ago, and she did not know a paragraph.

I forgot to mention to you M. de Maurepas. He was by far the ablest and most agreeable man I knew at Paris: and if you stay, I think I could take the liberty of giving you a letter to him; though, as he is now so great a man, and I remain so little an one, I don't know whether it would be quite so proper—though he was exceedingly good to me, and pressed me often to make him a visit in the country. But Lord Stormont can certainly carry you to him —a better passport.

There was one of my letters on which I wish to hear from you. There are always English coming from Paris, who would bring such a parcel: at least, you might send me one volume at a time, and the rest afterwards: but I should not care to have them ventured by the common conveyance. Madame du Deffand is negotiating for an enamel picture for me; but, if she obtains it, I had rather wait for it till you come. The books I mean, are those I told you Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer would give you a particular account of, for they know my mind exactly. Don't reproach me with not meeting you at Paris. Recollect what I suffered this time two

[1] Mr. Fox was returned for Malmesbury.—Wright.
[2] Jeremiah Dyson. See vol. iv. p. 59.—Cunningham.

years; and, if you can have any notion of fear, imagine my dread of torture for five months and a half! When all the quiet of Strawberry did but just carry me through it, could I support it in the noise of a French hotel! and, what would be still worse, exposed to receive all visits? for the French, you know, are never more in public than in the act of death. I am like animals, and love to hide myself *when I am dying*. Thank God, I am now two days beyond the crisis when I expected my dreadful periodic visitant, and begin to grow very sanguine about the virtue of the bootikins. I shall even have courage to go to-morrow to Chalfont for two days, as it is but a journey of two hours. I would not be a day's journey from hence for all Lord Clive's diamonds. This will satisfy *you*. I doubt Madame du Deffand is not so easily convinced: therefore, pray do not drop a hint before her of blaming me for not meeting you; rather assure her you are persuaded it would have been too great a risk for me at this season. I wish to have her quite clear of my attachment to her; but that I do not always find so easy. You, I am sure, will find her all zeal and *empressement* for you and yours. Adieu! Yours ever.

1462. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 22, 1774.

Though I have been writing two letters, of four sides each, one of which I enclose, I must answer your two last, if my fingers will move; and talk to you on the contents of the enclosed.

If the Jesuits have precipitated the Pope's death,[1] as seems more than probable, they have acted more by the spirit of their order, than by its good sense. Great crimes may raise a growing cause, but seldom retard the fall of a sinking one. This I take to be almost an infallible maxim. Great crimes, too, provoke more than they terrify; and there is no poisoning all that are provoked, and all that are terrified; who alternately provoke and terrify each other, till common danger produces common security. The Bourbon Monarchs will be both angry and frightened, the Cardinals frightened. It will be the interest of both not to revive an order that bullies with arsenic in its sleeve. The poisoned host will destroy the Jesuits, as well as the Pope: and perhaps the Church of Rome will fall by a wafer, as

[1] Benedict XIV. Ganganelli.—Walpole.

it rose by it; for such an edifice will tumble when once the crack has begun.

Our elections are almost over. Wilkes has taken possession of Middlesex without an enemy appearing against him; and, being as puissant a monarch as Henry the Eighth, and as little scrupulous, should, like him, date his acts *From our Palace of Bridewell, in the tenth year of our reign.* He has, however, met with a heroine to stem the tide of his conquests; who, though not of Arc, nor a *pucelle*, is a true *Joan* in spirit, style, and manners. This is her Grace of Northumberland [Lady Elizabeth Seymour], who has carried the mob of Westminster from him; sitting daily in the midst of Covent-garden; and will elect her son [Earl Percy] and Lord Thomas Clinton,[1] against Wilkes's two candidates, Lord Mahon[2] and Lord Mountmorris. She puts me in mind of what Charles the Second said of a foolish preacher, who was very popular in his parish: "I suppose his nonsense suits their nonsense."

Let me sweeten my letter by making you smile. A quaker has been at Versailles; and wanted to see the Comtes de Provence and D'Artois dine in public, but would not submit to pull off his hat. The Princes were told of it; and not only admitted him with his beaver on, but made him sit down and dine with them. Was it not very sensible and good-humoured? You and I know one who would not have been so gracious: I do not mean my nephew Lord Cholmondeley.[3] Adieu! I am tired to death.

P.S. I have seen the Duchess of Beaufort; who sings your praises quite in a tune I like. Her manner is much unpinioned to what it was, though her person remains as stately as ever; and powder is vastly preferable to those brown hairs, of whose preservation she was so fond. I am not so struck with the beauty of Lady Mary[4] as I was three years ago. Your nephew, Sir Horace, I see, by the papers, is come into Parliament: I am glad of it. Is not he yet arrived at Florence?

[1] Second son of Henry, Duke of Newcastle.—WALPOLE.

[2] Only son of Earl Stanhope.—WALPOLE.

[3] He means the Duke of Gloucester.—WALPOLE.

[4] Lady Mary Somerset, youngest daughter of Charles Noel, Duke of Beaufort. She was afterwards married to the Duke of Rutland.—WALPOLE. See Letter to Mann, of 3rd August, 1775.—CUNNINGHAM.

1463. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 27, 1774.

Don't be angry, dear lady! I did not mean any offence to your conjugal zeal. I always knew you could fill any part you please, and could carry a county election as easy as a prize at a ball. When I compared you to the Duchess of Charing Cross,[1] as the newspapers call her, was it possible you should think I saw any resemblance? If *you* took it for a sneer, *she* must have taken it for a compliment, which I doubt she would not do. Your troubles, I hope, are over and crowned with victory; mine are so, if you do not go to Madrid.

I know nothing, for I will not know the only thing that is to be known, elections. I am very ignorant who is chosen for my Lord Orford's boroughs. As he is so perfectly in his senses, I suppose he has brought in some men of quality or great speakers, or that some minister has recommended to him an intimate friend, who will give *credit* to the recommender, and be useful to my lord himself. Had he remained out of order, somebody or other might have taken advantage of his weakness, and imposed somebody upon him that would disgrace him; but as he is so well, I am easy. I do not desire the little vanity of having everybody say, that if I had had the management of his affairs, he would not have been exposed; nor could any man, surely, who wished me ill, make such a blunder as to give me that triumph!

Have you heard, Madam, of the quaker that has dined with the Comtes de Provence and d'Artois? It is exactly true. He would not pull off his hat; they admitted him with it on, and then made him sit down to table with them. Charles II. could not have been better humoured.

They say the late Pope was poisoned by the Jesuits. These gentlemen and the Czarina will repoison many royal personages that Voltaire had unpoisoned; and as he has both abused and praised the Jesuits, he may take which side he pleases, as he has done about every other question.

In the neighbouring city of Twickenham they talk of nothing but

[1] The Duchess of Northumberland. Northumberland House is at Charing Cross.—Cunningham.

houses broken open and robbed. I have called my militia into my castle, and mounted cannon on the battlements. Yet I was more afraid of a contested election for Middlesex; and when it was threatened, I thought I would not be the Duke of Northumberland's fine gate at Sion for the world. In short, one lives in very perilous times! The powder mills blow one up, and break all one's painted glass; one is robbed on the highway, though one is Prime Minister, and shot at into the bargain. I don't know what we shall come to, Madam; pray, do you? And pray, don't you think it is all that Wilkes's doing? Everybody would be good, and honest, and quiet, if it was not for him. Lady Greenwich and I think so, and we hope you are of our opinion; and wonder some Christian don't murder him.

1464. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 29, 1774.

I HAVE received your letter of the 23rd, and it certainly overpays me, when you thank instead of scolding me, as I feared. A passionate man has very little merit in being in a passion, and is sure of saying many things he repents, as I do. I only hope you think that I could not be so much in the wrong for everybody; nor should have been, perhaps, even for you, if I had not been certain I was the only person, at that moment, that could serve you essentially: and at such a crisis, I am sure I should take exactly the same part again, except in saying some things I did, of which I am ashamed![1] I will say no more now on that topic, nor on anything relating to it, because I have written my mind very fully, and you will know it soon. I can only tell you now, that I approve extremely your way of thinking, and hope you will not change it before you hear from me, and know some material circumstances. You and Lady Ailesbury and I agree exactly, and she and I certainly consider only *you*. I do not answer her last, because I could not help telling you how very kindly I take your letter. All I beg is, that you would have no delicacy about my serving you any way. You know it is a pleasure to me: anybody else may have views that would embarrass you; and, therefore, till you are on the spot, and can judge for

[1] This relates to Mr. Walpole having resented, in a very warm manner, some neglect on the part of his friends, which deprived Mr. Conway of a seat in Parliament at the general election which took place in the year 1774.—BERRY.

yourself (which I always insist on, because you are cooler than I, and because, though I have no interests to serve, I have passions, which equally mislead one), it will be wiser to decline all kind of proposals and offers. You will avoid the plague of contested elections and solicitations: and I see no reasons, at present, that can tempt you to be in a hurry.[1]

You must not expect to be Madame du Deffand's first favourite. Lady Ailesbury has made such a progress there, that you will not easily supplant her. I have received volumes in her praise.[2] You have a better chance with Madame de Cambis, who is very agreeable; and I hope you are not such an English husband as not to conform to the manners of Paris while you are there.

I forgot to mention one or two of my favourite objects to Lady Ailesbury, nay, I am not sure she will taste one of them, the church of the Celestines. It is crowded with beautiful old tombs: one of Francis II. whose beatitude is presumed from his being husband of the martyr Mary Stuart. Another is of the first wife of John Duke of Bedford, the Regent of France. I think you was once there with me formerly. The other is Richelieu's tomb, at the Sorbonne—but that everybody is carried to see. The Hôtel de Carnavalet,[3] near the Place Royale, is worth looking at, even for the façade, as you drive by. But of all earthly things the most worth seeing is the house at Versailles, where the King's pictures, not hung up, are kept. There is a treasure past belief, though in sad order, and piled one against another. Monsieur de Guerchy once carried me thither; and you may certainly get leave. At the Luxembourg are some hung up, and one particularly is worth going to see alone: it is the 'Deluge' by Nicolo Poussin, as winter. The three other seasons are good for nothing; but the 'Deluge' is the first picture in the world of its kind. You will be shocked to see the glorious pictures at the Palais

[1] A vacancy having taken place for St. Edmund's Bury, in March 1775, Mr. Conway was returned without opposition.—Wright. He had sat in the last two parliaments for Thetford, by nomination of the Duke of Grafton, but was now out of parliament until March, 1775, when on the succession of Augustus Hervey to the Earldom of Bristol, Conway came in for Bury St. Edmund's.—*Croker MS.*—Cunningham.

[2] "Miladi Ailesbury," writes Madame du Deffand, "est certainement la meilleure des femmes, la plus douce, et la plus tendre: je suis trompée si elle n'aime passionnément son mari, et si elle n'est pas parfaitement heureuse: son humeur me parait très-égale, sa politesse noble et aisée; elle a le meilleur ton du monde; exempte de toutes prétentions, elle plaira à tous les gens de goût, et ne déplaira jamais à personne; c'est de toutes les Anglaises que j'ai vues, celle que je trouve la plus aimable sans nulle exception."—Wright.

[3] Where Madame de Sévigné resided.—Walpole.

Royal transplanted to new canvasses, and new painted and varnished, as if they were to be scenes at the Opera—at least, they had treated half-a-dozen of the best so, three years ago, and were going on. The Prince of Monaco has a few fine, but still worse used; one of them shines more than a looking-glass. I fear the Exposition of pictures is over for this year; it is generally very *diverting*.[1] I, who went into every church of Paris, can assure you there are few worth it, but the Invalides—except the *scenery* at St. Roche, about one or two o'clock at noon, when the sun shines; the Carmelites, for the Guido and the portrait of Madame de la Vallière as a Magdalen; the Val de Grace, for a moment; the *treasure* at Notre Dame; the Sainte Chapelle, where in the ante-chapel are two very large enamelled portraits; the tomb of Condé at the Great Jesuits in the Rue St. Antoine, if not shut up; and the little church of St. Louis in the Louvre, where is a fine tomb of Cardinal Fleury, but large enough to stand on Salisbury-plain. One thing some of you *must* remember, as you return; nay, it is better to go soon to St. Denis, and Madame du Deffand must get you a particular order to be shown (which is never shown without) the effigies of the Kings.[2] They are in presses over the treasure which is shown, and where is the glorious antique cameo-cup; but the countenance of Charles IX. is so horrid and remarkable, you would think he had died on the morrow of the St. Barthelemi, and waked full of the recollection. If you love enamels and exquisite medals, get to see the collection of a Monsieur d'Henery, who lives in the corner of the street where Sir John Lambert lives—I forget its name. There is an old man behind the Rue de Colombier, who has a great but bad collection of old French portraits; I delighted in them, but perhaps you would not. *I*, you may be sure, hunted out everything of that sort. The convent and collection of St. Germain, I mean that over against the Hôtel du Parc Royal, is well worth seeing—but I forget names strangely—Oh! delightful!—Lord Cholmondeley sends me word he goes to Paris on Monday: I shall send this and my other letter by him. It was him I meant; I knew he was going, and had prepared it.

[1] He means from their extreme bad taste.—WALPOLE.

[2] The abbey of St. Denis was sadly shorn of its glories during the Revolution. On the 16th of October, 1793, the coffin of Louis XV. was taken out of the vaults; and, after a stormy debate, it was decided to throw the remains of all the kings, even those of Henry IV. and Louis XIV., which were yet to a great degree preserved entire, into a pit, to melt down their leaden coffins on the spot, and to take away and cast into bullets whatever lead there still remained in the church; not even excepting the roof.—WRIGHT.

Pray take care to lock up your papers in a strong box, that nobody can open. They imagine you are at Paris on some commission, and there is no trusting French hotels or servants. America is in a desperate situation. The accounts from the Congress are not expected before the 10th, and expected very warm. I have not time to tell you some manœuvres against them that will make your blood curdle. Write to me when you can by private hands, as I will to you. There are always English passing backwards and forwards.

1465. TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 7, 1774.

I HAVE written such tomes to Mr. Conway,[1] Madam, and have so nothing new to write, that I might as well, methinks, begin and end like the lady to her husband; "Je vous écris parceque je n'ai rien à faire: je finis parceque je n'ai rien à vous dire."[2] Yes, I have two complaints to make, one of your ladyship, the other of myself. You tell me nothing of Lady Harriet [Stanhope]: have you no tongue, or the French no eyes? or are her eyes employed in nothing but seeing? What a vulgar employment for a fine woman's eyes after she is risen from her toilet? I declare I will ask no more questions—what is it to me, whether she is admired or not? I should know how charming she is, though all Europe were blind. I hope I am not to be told by any barbarous nation upon earth what beauty and grace are!

For myself, I am guilty of the gout in my elbow; the left—witness my handwriting. Whether I caught cold by the deluge in the night, or whether the bootikins, like the water of Styx, can only preserve the parts they surround, I doubt they have saved me but three weeks, for so long my reckoning has been out. However, as I feel nothing in my feet, I flatter myself that this Pindaric transition will not be a regular ode, but a fragment, the more valuable for being imperfect.

Now for my Gazette.—Marriages—Nothing done. Intrigues—More in the political than civil way. Births—Under par since Lady Berkeley left off breeding. Gaming—Low water. Deaths. —Lord Morton, Lord Wentworth, Duchess Douglas. Election

[1] Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury were now at Paris together.—WALPOLE.
[2] Told in 'Walpoliana,' vol. i. p. 4.—CUNNINGHAM.

stock—More buyers than sellers. Promotions—Mr. Wilkes as high as he can go.—*Apropos*, he was told the Lord Chancellor intended to signify to him, that the King did not approve the City's choice: he replied, "Then I shall signify to his lordship, that I am at least as fit to be Lord Mayor as he to be Lord Chancellor." This being more Gospel than everything Mr. Wilkes says, the formal approbation was given.

Mr. Burke has succeeded in Bristol, and Sir James Peachey will miscarry in Sussex. But what care you, Madam, about our Parliament? You will see the *rentrée* of the old one, with songs and epigrams into the bargain. We do not shift our Parliaments with so much gaiety. Money in one hand, and abuse in t'other—those are all the arts we know. *Wit and a gamut*[1] I don't believe ever signified a Parliament, whatever the glossaries may say; for they never produce pleasantry and harmony. Perhaps you may not taste this Saxon pun, but I know it will make the Antiquarian Society die with laughing.

Expectation hangs on America. The result of the general assembly is expected in four or five days. If one may believe the papers, which one should not believe, the other side of the waterists are not *doux comme des moutons*, and yet we do intend to eat them. I was in town on Monday; the Duchess of Beaufort graced our loo, and made it as rantipole as a Quaker's meeting. *Loois Quinze*,[2] I believe, is arrived by this time, but I fear without *quinze louis*.

Your herb-snuff and the four glasses are lying in my warehouse, but I can hear of no ship going to Paris. You are now at Fontainbleau, but not thinking of Francis I., the Queen of Sweden, and Monaldelschi. It is terrible that one cannot go to Courts that are gone! You have supped with the Chevalier de Boufflers: did he act everything in the world, and sing everything in the world, and laugh at everything in the world? Has Madame de Cambis sung to you "*Sans dépit, sans légèreté?*"[3] Has Lord Cholmondeley delivered my pacquet? I hear I have hopes of Madame d'Olonne.[4] Gout or no gout, I shall be little in town till after Christmas. My elbow makes me bless myself that I am not at Paris. Old age is no

[1] Witenagemot.— CUNNINGHAM.

[2] This was a cant name given to a lady [Lady Powis], who was very fond of loo, and who had lost much money at that game.—BERRY.

[3] The first words of a favourite French air.—WALPOLE.

[4] The portrait in enamel of Madame d'Olonne by Petitot, see p. 148.—CUNNINGHAM

such uncomfortable thing, if one gives oneself up to it with a good grace, and don't drag it about

"To midnight dances and the public show."[1]

If one stays quietly in one's own house in the country, and cares for nothing but oneself, scolds one's servants, condemns everything that is new, and recollects how charming a thousand things were formerly that were very disagreeable, one gets over the winters very well, and the summers get over themselves.

1466. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 11, 1774.

I HAVE very little to tell you. Every day may bring us critical news from America, which will give the chief colour to the winter. I am in perfect ignorance of the situation of affairs there. I live quietly here, unconnected with all factions, enjoying the delightful place I have made, and even enjoying my old age, since the gout keeps away. The bitterness of the last fit, succeeded by my stewardship, gives a flavour to my tranquillity that, perhaps, I should not taste so much, if I had not lost it for nearly a year and a half. I propose to be little absent hence till after Christmas, a longer stay than I ever made in the country; but what can I see in London that I have not seen fifty times over? There is a new race, indeed, but does it promise to make the times more agreeable? Does the world talk of our orators, poets, or wits? Oh, no! It talks of vast fortunes made, or vast fortunes lost at play! It talks of Wilkes at the top of the wheel, and of Charles Fox at the bottom: all between is a blank.

It is not much better anywhere else. The King of Prussia, the hero of the last war, has only been a pickpocket in Poland. The Austrian and Russian eagles have turned vultures, and preyed on desolated champaigns. The Turkish war ended one don't know how without any signal action. France has been making Parliaments cross over and figure-in, and yet without the scene being at all amusing. For my part, I take Europe to be worn out. When Voltaire dies, we may say, "Good night!" I don't believe this age will be more read than the Byzantine historians.

[1] Pope.—CUNNINGHAM.

The bigamist Duchess [Kingston] is likely to become a real peeress at last. Lord Bristol[1] has been struck with a palsy that has taken away the use of all his limbs. If he dies, and Augustus should take a fancy to marry again, as two or three years ago he had a mind to do, his next brother, the Bishop,[2] may happen to assist the Duke of Kingston's relations with additional proofs of the first marriage. They now think they shall be able to intercept the receipt of the Duke's estate; but law is a horrid liar, and I never believe a word it says before the decision.

Nov. 14*th.*

There are advices from America that are said to be extremely bad: I don't know the particulars; but I have never augured well of that dispute! I fear we neither know how to proceed or retreat! I believe this is the case with many individuals, as well as with the public. Within this week we have had two deaths out of the common course. Bradshaw,[3] a man well known of late, but in a more silent way than for his *fame* to have reached you, shot himself yesterday se'nnight. His beginning was very obscure; when he grew more known, it was not to his honour. He has since been a very active Minister, of the second or third class, and more trusted, perhaps, than some of a higher class. Instead of making a great fortune, he had spent one, and could not go on a week longer. The Duke of Athol is dead as suddenly; drowned certainly; whether delirious from a fever or from some disappointment, is not clear. Two evenings ago Lord Berkeley shot a highwayman; in short, frenzy is at work from top to bottom, and I doubt we shall not be cool till there has been a good deal of blood let. You and I shall, probably, not see the subsiding of the storm, if the humours do boil over; and can a nation be in a high fever without a crisis? I see the patients; I do not see the doctors. Adieu!

1467. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 11, 1774.

I AM sorry there is still time, my dear Lord, to write to you again; and that though there is, I have so little to amuse you with. One

[1] George William, second Earl of Bristol.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Frederic Hervey, Bishop of Derry, who became Earl of Bristol after his brothers, George and Augustus.—WALPOLE.

[3] Secretary of the Treasury.—WALPOLE.

is not much nearer news for being within ten miles of London than if in Yorkshire; and besides, whatever reaches us, Lady Greenwich catches at the rebound before me, and sends you before I can. Our own circle furnishes very little. Dowagers are good for propagating news when planted, but have done with sending forth suckers. Lady Blandford's coffee-house is removed to town, and the Duchess of Newcastle's is little frequented, but by your sister Anne, Lady Browne, and me. This morning, indeed, I was at a very fine concert at old Franks's at Isleworth, and heard Leoni,[1] who pleased me more than anything I have heard these hundred years. There is a full melancholy melody in his voice, though a *falsetto*, that nothing but a natural voice ever compasses. Then he sung songs of Handel in the genuine simple style, and did not put one in pain like rope-dancers. Of the Opera I hear a dismal account; for I did not go to it to sit in our box like an old King dowager by myself. Garrick is treating the town, as it deserves and likes to be treated, with scenes, fireworks, and his own writing. A good new play I never expect to see more, nor have seen since 'The Provoked Husband,' which came out when I was at school.

Bradshaw is dead, they say by his own hand: I don't know wherefore. I was told it was a great political event. If it is, our politics run as low as our plays. From town I heard that Lord Bristol was taken speechless with a stroke of the palsy. If he dies, Madam Chudleigh[2] must be tried by her peers, as she is certainly either Duchess or Countess. Mr. Conway and his company are so pleased with Paris, that they talk of staying till Christmas. I am glad; for they will certainly be better diverted there than here. Your Lordship's most faithful servant.

[1] Leoni, a celebrated singer of the day, considered one of the best in England. He was a Jew, and engaged at the synagogues, from which he is said to have been dismissed for singing in the 'Messiah' of Handel.—WRIGHT.

[2] The Duchess of Kingston; against whom an indictment for bigamy was found on the 8th of December, she having married the Duke of Kingston, having been previously married to the Hon. Augustus John Hervey, then living, and who, by the death of his brother, in March, 1775, became Earl of Bristol.—WRIGHT.

1468. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 12, 1774.

I HAVE received a delightful letter from you of four sheets, and another since. I shall not reply to the campaigning part (though much obliged to you for it), because I have twenty other subjects more pressing to talk of. The first is to thank you for your excessive goodness to my dear old friend [Madame du Deffand]—she has some indiscretions, and *you must not have any to her;* but she has the best heart in the world, and I am happy, at her great age, that she has spirits enough not to be always upon her guard. A bad heart, especially after long experience, is but too apt to overflow *inwardly* with prudence. At least, as I am but too like her, and have corrected too few of my faults, I would fain persuade myself that some of them flow from a good principle—but I have not time to talk of myself, though you are much too partial to me, and give me an opportunity; yet I shall not take it.

Now for English news, and then your letter again. There has been a great mortality here; though Death has rather been *prié* than a volunteer. Bradshaw (as I told Lady Aylesbury last post) shot himself. He is dead, totally undone. Whether that alone was the cause, or whether he had not done something worse, I doubt. I cannot conceive that, with his resources, he should have been hopeless—and, to suspect him of delicacy, impossible!

A ship is arrived from America, and I doubt with very bad news; for none but trifling letters have yet been given out—but I am here, see nobody that knows anything, and only hear by accident from people that drop in. The sloop that is to bring the result of the general assembly is not yet come. There are indeed rumours, that both the non-importation and even non-exportation have been decreed, and that the flame is universal. I hope this is exaggerated! yet I am told the stocks will fall very much in a day or two.

I have nothing to tell Lady Aylesbury, but that I hear a deplorable account of the Opera. There is a new puppet-show at Drury-lane, as fine as scenes can make it, called 'The Maid of the Oaks,'[1] and as dull as the author could not help making it.

[1] Mr. Walpole's opinion of this author [General Burgoyne] totally changed upon the appearance of 'The Heiress,' which he always called "the genteelest comedy" in the English language.—BERRY.

Except M. d'Herouville, I know all the people you name. C. I doubt, by things I have heard formerly, may have been a *concussionnaire*. The Duke, your *protecteur*,[1] is *médiocre* enough; you would have been more pleased with his wife. The Chevalier's[2] bon-mot is excellent, and so is he. He has as much *buffonnerie* as the Italians, with more wit and novelty. His impromptu verses often admirable. Get Madame du Deffand to show you his embassy to the Princess Christine, and his verses on his eldest uncle, beginning *Si Monsieur de Veau*. His second uncle has parts, but they are not so natural. Madame de Caraman is a very good kind of woman, but has not a quarter of her sister's parts.[3] Madame de Mirepoix is *the* agreeable woman of the world when she pleases—but there must not be a card in the room. Lord * * * * has acted like himself; that is, unlike anybody else. You know, I believe, that I think him a very good speaker; but I have little opinion of his judgment and knowledge of the world, and a great opinion of his affectation and insincerity. The Abbé Raynal, though he wrote that fine work on the 'Commerce des Deux Indes,' is the most tiresome creature in the world. The first time I met him was at the dull Baron d'Oibach's: we were twelve at table: I dreaded opening my mouth in French, before so many people and so many servants: he began questioning me, cross the table, about our Colonies, which I understand as little as I do Coptic. I made him signs I was deaf. After dinner, he found I was not, and never forgave me. Mademoiselle de Raucoux I never saw till you told me Madame du Deffand said she was *démoniaque sans chaleur!*[4] What painting! I see her now. Le Kain sometimes pleased me, oftener not. Molé is charming in genteel or in pathetic comedy, and would be fine in tragedy, if he was stronger. Preville is always perfection. I like his wife in affected parts, though not animated enough. There was a delightful woman who did the Lady Wishforts, I don't know if there still, I think her name Mademoiselle Drouin; and a fat woman, rather elderly, who sometimes acted the *soubrette*. But you have missed the Dumenil, and Caillaut! What

[1] The Duc de la Vallière; of whom Mr. Conway had said, that, when presented to him, "his reception was what might be called good, but rather *de protection*."—Berry.

[2] The Chevalier de Boufflers; well known for his 'Letters from Switzerland,' addressed to his mother; his 'Reine de Golconde,' a tale; and a number of very pretty Vers de Société.—Berry.

[3] Madame de Cambis.—Wright.

[4] "I saw her just forty years after, and must confess that I thought I could see the remains of what caused Madame du Deffand's bon-mot. She had acquired a perfect knowledge of the stage and of her part, but she showed little feeling." *Croker MS.*—Cunningham.

irreparable losses! Madame du Deffand, perhaps—I don't know—could obtain your hearing the Clairon—yet the Dumenil was infinitely preferable.

I could now almost find in my heart to laugh at you for liking Boutin's garden.[1] Do you know, that I drew a plan of it, as the completest absurdity I ever saw? What! a river that wriggles at right angles through a stone gutter, with two tansy puddings that were dug out of it, and three or four beds in a row, by a corner of the wall, with samples of grass, corn, and of *en friche*, like a tailor's paper of patterns! And you like this! I will tell Park-place—Oh! I had forgot your audience in dumb show—Well, as Madame de Sévigné said, "Le Roi de Prusse, c'est le plus grand Roi du monde" still.[2] My love to the old Parliament; I don't love new ones.

I went several times to Madame de Monconseil's, who is just what you say. Mesdames de Tingri et de la Vauguion I never saw: Madame de Noailles once or twice, and enough. You say something of Madame de Mallet, which I could not read; for, by the way, your brother and I agree that you are grown not to write legibly: is that lady in being? I knew her formerly. Madame de Blot[3] I know, and Monsieur de Paulmy I know; but for Heaven's sake who is Colonel Conway?[4] Mademoiselle Sanadon is *la sana donna*, and not Mademoiselle *Celadon*,[5] as you call her. Pray assure my good Monsieur Schouvaloff[6] of my great regard: he is one of the best of beings.

[1] See another ludicrous description of this garden in a letter to Mr. Chute [of 5th August, 1771; vol. iv. p. 320].—Walpole.

[2] This alludes to Mr. Conway's presentation to the King of France, Louis XVI., at Fontainbleau, of which, in his letter to Mr. Walpole, he gives the following account:—"On St. Hubert's day in the morning I had the honour of being presented to the King: 'twas a good day, and an excellent deed. You may be sure I was well received, the French are so polite! and their Court so polished! The Emperor, indeed, talked to me every day; so did the King of Prussia, regularly and much; but that was not to be compared to the extraordinary reception of his most Christian Majesty, who, when I was presented, did not stop nor look to see what sort of an animal was offered to his notice, but carried his head, as it seemed, somewhat higher, and passed on his way."—Berry.

[3] Wife of M. Chavigny de Blot, attached to the service of the Duke of Orleans: she was sister to the Comte d'Hennery, who died at St. Domingo, where he was commander-in-chief.—Wright.

[4] An officer in the French service.—Walpole.

[5] Mademoiselle Sanadon, a lady who lived with Madame du Deffand.—Walpole. She was niece to the Père Sanadon, well known by his translation of Horace, accompanied with valuable notes, and by his elegant poems and orations in the Latin language.—Wright.

[6] The Russian minister at Paris. Madame du Deffand thus describes the Count in a letter to Walpole:—"Je trouve notre bon ami un peu ennuyeux; il n'a nulle inflexion dans la parole, nul mouvement dans l'ame; ce qu'il dit est une lecture sans ponctuation."—Wright.

I have said all I could, at least all I should. I reserve the rest of my paper for a postscript; for this is but Saturday, and my letter cannot depart till Tuesday: but I could not for one minute defer answering your charming volumes, which interest me so much. I grieve for Lady Harriet's[1] swelled face, and wish for both their sakes she could transfer it to her father. I assure her I meant nothing by desiring you to see the verses to the Princess Christine,[2] wherein there is very profane mention of a pair of swelled cheeks. I hear nothing of Madame d'Olonne.[3] Oh! make Madame du Deffand show you the sweet portrait of Madame de Prie, the Duke of Bourbon's mistress.[4] Have you seen Madame de Monaco, and the remains of Madame de Brionne? If you wish to see Mrs. A * * *, ask for the Princesse de Ligne. If you have seen Monsieur de Maurepas, you have seen the late Lord Hardwicke.[5] By your not naming him, I suppose the Duc de Nivernois is not at Paris. Say a great deal for me to M. de Guisnes. You will not see my passion, the Duchess de Chatillon. If you see Madame de Nivernois, you will think the Duke of Newcastle is come to life again. Alas! where is my postscript? Adieu!

1469. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 14, 1774.

I SHOULD not have been silent so long, Madam, had I had anything agreeable to tell you; but really the times are so melancholy, that I do not care to trouble my friends with my gloomy reflections. I do not indeed know what is the matter, nor what I am so grieved about, but still as long as I see that

> There is something rotten in the state of Denmark,

I am too good a patriot or courtier, which is the same thing, not to have my bosom full of cares and anxiety.

> Portents and prodigies have grown so frequent
> That they have lost their name.

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[1] Lady Harriet Stanhope, afterwards married to Lord Foley, was at this time at Paris with her father, the Earl of Harrington.—WALPOLE.

[2] By the Chevalier de Boufflers.—WALPOLE.

[3] The beautiful enamel miniature now at Strawberry Hill.—WALPOLE. Sold at the Strawberry Hill sale to Mr. Holford for 141*l.* 15*s.*—CUNNINGHAM.

[4] This portrait is now at Strawberry Hill.—WALPOLE.

[5] He means, from their personal resemblance.—WALPOLE.

I cannot say that the Thames has run backwards or overflown Richmond Hill, that the stars drop out of their sockets, that I have heard wolves howl at noonday, or that the churchyard has given up its dead to frighten people into their senses, instead of out of them, as ghosts one should think would do, if one did not know the contrary from the best authorities. Still indubitably the times are out of joint, and one must despair of the commonwealth, when Marcus Portius Bradshaw falls by his own hand, and Scotch dukes fall into horse-ponds as they are taking a walk in a fine November evening; but I will not fill your Ladyship's mind with the apprehensions that these omens have raised in mine; I will quit the subject, and answer your letter.

You do me a great deal too much honour in suspecting me of writing a speech for the new senator.[1] All the good things in that speech were George Selwyn's, and have been repeated in every coffee-house in town these three weeks; and though I am sorry my nephew's madness has exposed him to the dirty malice of anybody that had too little generosity not to take advantage of it, I should not have been the person certainly to joke on such an occasion, divert the town at the expense of so near a relation, to whom I trust I have shown very different attention. Madness is an excuse for my nephew; they who make a friend of Macreth without being out of their senses, have I suppose very good or very bad reasons for it.

Don't imagine, Madam, that I shall congratulate you on the sale of your house, at least not till I hear you have bought another. I still less can compliment you on Lord Ossory's flinging away so much money on an election, and not for himself, who was sure of his own seat. However, I do not deny but there was a greatness of mind in it, at least gratitude, considering the many favours[2] he has received, and that he is the only one of his connection that has received any.

I am not settled in Arlington Street, nor shall be till after Christmas, Madam. I grow so old, that I find the quiet composed life I lead here more agreeable than the ways of London, and the same eternal round of the very same things. I am making catalogues of my Collection, building a hot-house, ranging my medals which I have

[1] Bob Macreth. See note at p. 152 of this vol., and vol. ii. p. 201.—Cunningham.

[2] It is difficult to discover to what these words "many favours" allude. The only one that Lord Ossory could have been said to have received from the Government was the Lord Lieutenancy of Bedfordshire. There does not either appear to have been a contest for that county; the expenses, however, might have been incurred in the town.—R. Vernon Smith. It is said ironically.—Cunningham.

brought hither, sorting and burning papers, in short, *setting my house in order* against a certain time that happens but once in one's *life*, and which one has not time to think of in town. I have consequently not seen Armida nor Mrs. Abingdon's coiffure, which I conclude consists of as many plumes as the helmet of Otranto. The only time I saw Lady Mary Somerset she had moulted her feathers, and wore a hat over her nose, so I only fell in love with her chin. The measles I had in the last century, and as it is one of the juvenile attributes that one does not cut a second time, like one's colt's tooth and a caper, I shall take care not to appear in public till the fashion is over that I may be *censé* to be confined with a red face instead of a very pale one. I rejoice for Lady Louisa's [Fitzpatrick's] sake that the measles leave no marks: she will lose nothing by a fortnight's eclipse. The only new thing I know is that I have heard Leoni, and don't remember that I ever was so pleased with a voice since *you* were born; and yet he was hoarse, by an accident which the Jews don't quite prevent.

1470. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Nov. 23, 1774.

I AM in town, Madam, and in great distress. I have lost a most faithful friend and servant, my deputy Mr. Tullie, and as I am a *Roi Fainéant*, I know not how to conduct my own affairs. One's first thought you may be sure is to send for Lord Chatham, but as I have difficulties enough, I don't want to be helped into more; and therefore I shall leave that resource to my heir-apparent, Mr. Martin, and only consult *my friends*. It is some comfort to me that Mr. Tullie did not die *en ministre*, but in his bed. The nation had another great loss last night: Lord Clive went off suddenly. He had been sent for to town by one of his Indian friends—and died. You may imagine, Madam, all that is said already. In short, people will be forced to die before as many witnesses as an old Queen is brought to bed, or the coroner will be sent for.

Have you got the 'History of the Troubadors?' It is very curious: I have longed for it several years, and yet am cruelly disappointed. St. Palaye was too old to put his materials together; his friends called, odd man! and nothing was ever so dully executed. You will say of the chapters, as I did of the houses at Paris, there

is such a sameness, that one does not know whether one is in that one is in, or in that one came out of.

Lord H. has just been here, and told me *the manner* of Lord Clive's death. Whatever had happened, it had flung him into convulsions, to which he was very subject. Dr. Fothergill gave him, as he had done on like occasions, a dose of laudanum, but the pain in his bowels was so violent, that he asked for a second dose. Dr. Fothergill said, if he took another, he would be dead in an hour. The moment Fothergill was gone, he swallowed another, for another it seems stood by him, and he is dead.

I am very sorry to hear Lord Holland is so ill. Does not Lord Ossory come to renew his senatorial dignity?

1471. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 24, 1774.

I THANK you, my dear Sir, for your news of the Conclave and of the Duchess[1] and her ship-load of plunder. If the captain carries it off, it will be but an episode well suited to the history. I shall like a continuation of both subjects.

As you only say that you mentioned a certain election to the Countess,[2] I conclude you had not yet received my letter for her. The interlude of Macreth[3] has given so much offence, that, after having run the gauntlet, he has been persuaded to be modest and give up his seat. I should not say *give*, but sell it. I do not believe that the buyer will be much more creditable; but, happily, I am free from all this disgraceful transaction.

A great event happened two days ago—a political and moral event; the sudden death of that second Kouli Khan, Lord Clive. There was certainly illness in the case; the world thinks more than illness. His constitution was exceedingly broken and disordered, and grown subject to violent pains and convulsions. He came unexpectedly to town last Monday, and they say, ill. On Tuesday his physician gave him a dose of laudanum, which had not the desired effect. On the rest, there are two stories; one, that the physician

[1] The Duchess of Kingston.—WALPOLE.

[2] Countess Orford, living at Florence.—WALPOLE.

[3] Robert Macreth. He had been a waiter at White's. Lord Orford, having borrowed money of him, brought him into Parliament for his borough of Castle-Rising; and, to excuse it, pretended that his mother, Lady Orford, who knew nothing of it, borrowed the money.—WALPOLE.

repeated the dose; the other, that he doubled it himself, contrary to advice. In short, he has terminated at fifty a life of so much glory, reproach, art, wealth, and ostentation! He had just named ten members for the new Parliament.

Next Tuesday that Parliament is to meet—and a deep game it has to play! few Parliaments a greater. The world is in amaze here that no account is arrived from America of the result of their General Congress—if any is come it is very secret; and *that* has no favourable aspect. The combination and spirit there seem to be universal, and is very alarming. I am the humble servant of events, and you know never meddle with prophecy. It would be difficult to descry good omens, be the issue what it will.

The old French Parliament is restored with great *éclat*. Monsieur de Maurepas, author of the revolution, was received one night at the Opera with boundless shouts of applause. It is even said that the mob intended, when the King should go to hold the *lit de justice*, to draw his coach. How singular it would be if Wilkes's case should be copied for a King of France! Do you think Rousseau was in the right, when he said that he could tell what would be the manners of any capital city, from certain given lights? I don't know what he may do on Constantinople and Pekin—but Paris and London! I don't believe Voltaire likes these changes. I have seen nothing of his writing for many months; not even on the poisoning Jesuits.[1] For our part, I repeat it, we shall contribute nothing to the *Histoire des Mœurs*, not for want of materials, but for want of writers. We have comedies without novelty, gross satires without stings, metaphysical eloquence, and antiquarians that discover nothing.

Bœotûm in crasso jurares aere natos!

Don't tell me I am grown old and peevish and supercilious—name the geniuses of 1774, and I submit. The next Augustan age will dawn on the other side of the Atlantic. There will, perhaps, be a Thucydides at Boston, a Xenophon at New York, and, in time, a Virgil at Mexico, and a Newton at Peru. At last, some curious traveller from Lima[2] will visit England and give a description of the ruins of St. Paul's, like the editions of Balbec and Palmyra; but am I not prophesying, contrary to my consummate prudence, and casting horoscopes of empires like Rousseau? Yes; well, I will go and dream of my visions.

[1] They poisoned Pope Ganganelli.—WALPOLE.

[2] The *original* of Mr. Macaulay's 'New Zealander.'—CUNNINGHAM.

29*th.*

P.S. The Ecclesiastical Court, I hear, has decided, and will pronounce, that the person commonly called Duchess of Kingston is a certain Mrs. Hervey. The new Lord Holland[1] is dead—stay; you must not believe a word I tell you. Truth in this climate won't keep sweet four-and-twenty hours. Lord Bristol says, nothing can be done against the Duchess of Kingston.

The Parliament opened just now—they say the speech talks of the *rebellion* of the Province of Massachusetts; but if *they-say* tells a lie, I wash my hands of it. As your gazetteer, I am obliged to send you all news, true or false. I have believed and unbelieved everything I have heard since I came to town. Lord Clive has died every death in the parish register; at present it is most fashionable to believe he cut his throat. That he is dead, is certain; so is Lord Holland—and so is not the Bishop of Worcester [Johnson]; however, to show you that I am at least as well informed as greater personages, the bishopric was on Saturday given to Lord North's brother—so for once the Irishman was in the right, and a pigeon, at least a dove, can be in two places at once.

1472. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington Street, Nov. 27, 1774.

I HAVE received your delightful plump packet with a letter of six pages, one from Madame du Deffand, the Eloges,[2] and the *Lit de justice*. Now, observe my gratitude: I appoint you my resident at Paris; but you are not to resemble all our ministers abroad, and expect to live at home, which would destroy *my Lord Castlecomer's*[3] view in your staying at Paris. However, to prove to you that I have some gratitude that is not totally selfish, I will tell you what little news I know, before I answer your letter; for English news, to be sure, is the most agreeable circumstance in a letter from England.

On my coming to town yesterday, there was nothing but more deaths—don't you think we have the plague? The Bishop of

[1] Stephen Fox, second Lord Holland.—WALPOLE.

[2] Two rival Eloges of Fontenelle, by Champfort and La Harpe.—WRIGHT.

[3] A cant phrase of Mr. Walpole's; which took its rise from the following story:—The tutor of a young Lord Castlecomer, who lived at Twickenham with his mother, having broken his leg, and somebody pitying the poor man to the mother, Lady Castlecomer, she replied, "Yes, indeed, it is very inconvenient to my Lord Castlecomer."—BERRY.

Worcester [Johnson], Lord Breadalbane, Lord Strathmore. The first fell from his horse, or with his horse, at Bath, and the bishopric was incontinently given to Bishop North.

America is still more refractory, and I doubt will outvote the Ministry. They have picked General Gage's pocket of three pieces of cannon,[1] and intercepted some troops that were going to him. Sir William Draper is writing plans of pacification in our newspapers, and Lord Chatham flatters himself that he shall be sent for when the patient is given over; which I don't think at all unlikely to happen. My poor nephew [Lord Orford] is very political too: so we shall not want mad-doctors. *Apropos*, I hear Wilkes says he will propose Macreth[2] for Speaker.

The Ecclesiastical Court are come to a resolution that the Duchess of Kingston is Mrs. Hervey; and the sentence will be public in a fortnight. It is not so certain that she will lose the estate. Augustus[3] is not in a much more pleasant predicament than she is. I saw Lord Bristol last night: he looks perfectly well, but his speech is much affected, and his right hand.

Lady Lyttelton, who, you know, never hears anything that has happened, wrote to me two days ago, to ask if it would not be necessary for *you* to come over for the meeting of the Parliament. I answered, very gravely, that to be sure you ought: but though Sir James Morgan threatened you loudly with a petition, yet, as it could not be heard till after Christmas, I was afraid you would not be persuaded to come sooner. I hope she will inquire who Sir James Morgan is, and that people will persuade her she has made a confusion about Sir James Peachy. Now for your letter.

I have been in the Chambre de Parlement, I think they call it the Grande Chambre; and was shown the corner in which the monarchs sit, and do not wonder you did not guess where it was they sat. It is just like the dark corner, under the window, where I always sat in the House of Commons. What has happened, has past exactly according to my ideas. When one King breaks one parliament, and another another, what can the result be but despotism? or of what else is it a proof? If a Tory King displaces his father's Whig

[1] The seizure of Fort William and Mary, near Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, by the provincial militia, in which they found many barrels of gunpowder, several pieces of cannon, &c.—WRIGHT.

[2] Bob Macreth. See note at p. 152 of this volume, and also vol. ii. p. 201.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] The Hon. Augustus Hervey, to whom she was first married.—WALPOLE.

lord chamberlain, neither lord chamberlain has the more or the less power over the Theatres and Court mournings and Birth-day balls. All that can arrive is, that the people will be still more attached to the old parliament, from this seeming restitution of a right—but the people must have some power before their attachment can signify a straw. The old parliament, too, may some time or other give itself more airs on this confession of right; but that too cannot be but in a minority, or when the power of the Crown is lessened by reasons that have nothing to do with the parliament. I will answer for it, they will be too *grateful* to give umbrage to their restorer. Indeed, I did not think the people would be so quick-sighted at once, as to see the distinction of old and new was without a difference. Methinks France and England are like the land and the sea; one gets a little sense when the other loses it.

I am quite satisfied with all you tell me about my friend [Madame du Deffand]. My intention is certainly to see her again, if I am able; but I am too old to lay plans, especially when it depends on the despot gout to register or cancel them. It is even melancholy to see her, when it will probably be but once more; and still more melancholy, when we ought to say to one another, in a different sense from the common *au revoir!* However, as mine is a pretty cheerful kind of philosophy, I think the best way is to think of dying, but to talk and act as if one was not to die; or else one tires other people, and dies before one's time. I have truly all the affection and attachment for her that she deserves from me, or I should not be so very thankful as I am for your kindness to her. The Choiseuls will certainly return at Christmas, and will make her life much more agreeable. The Duchess has as much attention to her as I could have; but that will not keep me from making her a visit.

I have only seen, not known, the younger Madame de Boufflers. For her musical talents, I am little worthy of them—yet I am just going to Lady Bingham's to hear the Bastardella, whom, though the first singer in Italy, Mrs. Yates could not or would not agree with;[1] and she is to have twelve hundred pounds for singing twelve times at the Pantheon, where, if she had a voice as loud as Lord Clare's, she could not be heard. The two *bons-mots* you sent me are excellent; but, alas! I had heard them both before; consequently your

[1] Mrs. Yates was at this time join manager of the Opera with Mrs. Brook.—WRIGHT.

own, which is very good too, pleased me much more. M. de Stainville I think you will not like: he has sense, but has a dry military harshness, that at least did not suit me—and then I hate his barbarity to his wife.[1]

You was very lucky indeed to get one of the sixty tickets.[2] Upon the whole, your travels have been very fortunate, and the few mortifications amply compensated. If a Duke[3] has been spiteful when your back was turned, a hero-king has been all courtesy. If another king has been silent, an emperor has been singularly gracious. Frowns or silence may happen to anybody: the smiles have been addressed to you particularly. So was the ducal frown indeed—but would you have earned a smile at the price set on it? One cannot do right and be always applauded—but in such cases are not frowns tantamount?

As my letter will not set forth till the day after to-morrow, I reserve the rest for my additional news, and this time *will* reserve it.

St. Parliament's day, 29th, after breakfast.

The [King's] Speech is said to be firm, and to talk of the *rebellion* of our province of Massachusetts. No sloop is yet arrived to tell us how to call the rest. Mr. Van[4] is to move for the expulsion of Wilkes; which will distress, and may produce an odd scene. Lord Holland[5] is certainly dead; the papers say, Robinson too, but that I don't know:—so many deaths of late make report kill to right and left.

[1] Upon a suspicion of gallantry [with Clairval, an actor], she was confined for life.—Walpole. In the convent of Les Filles de Sainte Marie, at Nancy.—Wright.

[2] To see the *lit de justice* held by Louis XVI. when he recalled the Parliament of Paris, banished by Louis XV. at the instigation of the Chancellor Maupeou, and suppressed the new one of their creation.—Berry.

[3] The Duke de Choiseul.—Walpole. Ridiculous. He means the Duke of Grafton, who did not again return Conway for Thetford. *Croker MS.*—Cunningham.

[4] Charles Van, Esq., member for Brecon town. No motion took place.—Wright.

[5] Lord Holland (Mr. Fox) died on the 26th, at his seat near Andover.—Cunningham.

1473. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 15, 1774.

As I wrote to Lady Aylesbury but on Tuesday, I should not have followed it so soon with this, if I had nothing to tell you but of myself. My gouts are never dangerous, and the shades of them not important. However, to despatch this article at once, I will tell you, that the pain I felt yesterday in my elbow made me think all former pain did not deserve the name. Happily the torture did not last above two hours; and, which is more surprising, it is all the real pain I have felt; for though my hand has been as sore as if flayed, and that both feet are lame, the bootikins demonstrably prevent or extract the sting of it, and I see no reason not to expect to get out in a fortnight more. Surely, if I am laid up but one month in two years, instead of five or six, I have reason to think the bootikins sent from heaven.

The long-expected sloop is arrived at last, and is, indeed, a *man of war!* The General Congress have voted, a non-importation, a non-exportation, a non-consumption; that, in case of hostilities committed by the troops at Boston, the several provinces will march to the assistance of their countrymen; that the cargoes of ships now at sea shall be sold on their arrival, and the money arising thence given to the poor at Boston; that a letter, in the nature of a petition of rights, shall be sent to the King; another to the House of *Commons;* a third to the people of England; a demand of repeal of all the Acts of parliament affecting North America passed during this reign, as also of the Quebec bill: and these resolutions not to be altered till such repeal is obtained.

Well, I believe you do not regret being neither in parliament nor in administration! As you are an idle man, and have nothing else to do, you may sit down and tell one a remedy for all this. Perhaps you will give yourself airs, and say you was a prophet, and that prophets are not honoured in their own country. Yet, if you have any inspiration about you, I assure you it will be of great service—we are at our wit's end—which was no great journey. Oh! you conclude Lord Chatham's crutch will be supposed a wand, and be sent for. They might as well send for *my* crutch; and they should not have it; the stile is a little too high to help them over. His Lordship is a little fitter for raising a storm than laying one, and of late seems to have lost both virtues. The Americans at least have

acted like men,[1] gone to the bottom at once, and set the whole upon the whole. Our conduct has been that of pert children: we have thrown a pebble at a mastiff, and are surprised it was not frightened. Now we must be worried by it, or must kill the guardian of the house, which will be plundered the moment little master has nothing but the old nurse to defend it. But I have done with reflections; you will be fuller of them than I.

1474. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 26, 1774.

I BEGIN my letter to-day, to prevent the fatigue of dictating two to-morrow. In the first and best place, I am very near recovered; that is, though still a mummy, I have no pain left, nor scarce any sensation of gout except in my right hand, which is still in complexion and shape a lobster's claw. Now, unless anybody can prove to me that three weeks are longer than five months and a half, they will hardly convince me that the bootikins are not a cure for fits of the gout, and a very short cure, though they cannot prevent it: nor perhaps is it to be wished they should; for if the gout prevents everything else, would not one have something that does? I have but one single doubt left about the bootikins, which is, whether they do not weaken my breast: but as I am sensible that my own spirits do half the mischief, and that, if I could have held my tongue, and kept from talking and dictating letters, I should not have been half so bad as I have been, there remains but half due to bootikins on the balance: and surely the ravages of the last long fit, and two years more in age, ought to make another deduction. Indeed, my forcing myself to dictate my last letter to you almost killed me; and since the gout is not dangerous to me, if I am kept perfectly quiet, my good old friend must have patience, and not insist upon letters from me but when it is quite easy to me to send them. So much for me and my gout. I will not endeavour to answer such parts of your last letters as I can in this manner, and considering how difficult it is to read *your* writing in a dark room.

I have not yet been able to look into the French harangues you

[1] "I have not words to express my satisfaction," says Lord Chatham, in a letter of the 24th, "that the Congress has conducted this most arduous and delicate business with such manly wisdom and calm resolution, as do the highest honour to their deliberations. Very few are the things contained in their resolves, that I could wish had been otherwise." *Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 368.—WRIGHT.

sent me. Voltaire's verses to Robert Covelle are not only very bad, but very contemptible.

I am delighted with all the honours you receive, and with all the amusements they procure you, which is the best part of honours. For the glorious part, I am always like the man in Pope's 'Donne,'

Then happy he who shows the tombs, said I.

That is, they are least troublesome there. The *serenissime*[1] you met at Montmorency is one of the least to my taste; we quarrelled about Rousseau, and I never went near him after my first journey. Madame du Deffand will tell you the story, if she has not forgotten it.

It is supposed here, that the new proceedings of the French Parliament will produce great effects: I don't suppose any such thing. What America will produce I know still less; but certainly something very serious. The merchants have summoned a meeting for the second of next month, and the petition from the Congress to the King has arrived. The heads have been shown to Lord Dartmouth; but I hear one of the agents is against presenting it; yet it is thought it will be delivered, and then be ordered to be laid before Parliament. The whole affair has already been talked of there on the army and navy days; and Burke, they say, has shone with amazing wit and ridicule on the late inactivity of Gage, and his losing his cannon and straw; on his being entrenched in a town with an army of observation; with that army being, as Sir William Meredith had said, an asylum for magistrates, and to secure the port. Burke said, he had heard of an asylum for debtors and whores, never for magistrates; and of ships, never of armies, securing a port. This is all there has been in Parliament, but elections. Charles Fox's place did not come into question. Mr. * * *, who is one of the new elect, has opened, but with no success. There is a seaman, Luttrell,[2] that promises much better.

I am glad you like the Duchesse de Lauzun:[3] she is one of my

[1] The Prince de Conti.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Hon. James Luttrell, fourth son of Lord Irnham, a lieutenant in the navy.—WRIGHT.

[3] She became Duchesse de Biron upon the death of her husband's grandfather, the Maréchal Duc de Biron.—BERRY Her person is thus described by Rousseau:—"Amélie de Boufflers a une figure, une douceur, une timidité de vierge: rien de plus aimable et de plus intéressant que sa figure; rien de plus tendre et de plus chaste que les sentimens qu'elle inspire."—WRIGHT.

favourites. The Hôtel du Chatelet promised to be very fine, but was not finished when I was last at Paris. I was much pleased with the person that slept against St. Lambert's poem: I wish I had thought of the nostrum, when Mr. Seward, a thousand years ago, at Lyons, would read an epic poem to me just as I had received a dozen letters from England. St. Lambert is a great jackanapes, and a very tiny genius. I suppose the poem was 'The Seasons,' which is four fans spun out into a Georgic. If I had not been too ill, I should have thought of bidding you hear midnight mass on Christmas-eve in Madame du Deffand's tribune, as I used to do. To be sure, you know that her apartment was part of Madame du Montespan's, whose arms are on the back of the grate in Madame du Deffand's own bedchamber. *Apropos*, ask her to show you Madame de Prie's picture, M. le Duc's mistress—I am very fond of it—and make her tell you her history.[1]

I have but two or three words more. Remember my parcel of letters from Madame du Deffand,[2] and pray remember this injunction, not to ruin yourself in bringing presents. A very slight fairing of a guinea or two obliges as much, is more fashionable and not a moment sooner forgotten than a magnificent one; and then you may very cheaply oblige the more persons; but as the sick fox, in Gay's Fable, says (for one always excepts oneself),

A chicken too might do me good——

I allow you to go as far as three or even five guineas for a snuff-box for me: and then, as * * * * * told the King, when he asked for the reversion of the lighthouse for two lives, and the King reproached him with having always advised him against granting reversions; he replied, "Oh! Sir, but if your Majesty will give me this, I will take care you shall never give away another." Adieu, with my own left hand.

[1] Madame de Prie was the mistress of the Regent Duke of Orleans. See p. 148.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] At Walpole's earnest solicitation, Madame du Deffand returned by General Conway all the letters she had received from him. In so doing, she thus wrote to him:—"Vous aurez long-tems de quoi allumer votre feu, surtout si vous joignez à ce que j'avais de vous ce que vous avez de moi, et rien ne serait plus juste: mais je m'en rapporte à votre prudence; je ne suivrai pas l'exemple de méfiance que vous me donnez."—WRIGHT. He had insisted on Madame du Deffand's returning by Mr. Conway all his letters to her. See her Letters, vol. ii. Letter 204. *Croker MS.*—CUNNINGHAM.

1475. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 31, 1774.

No child was ever so delighted to go into breeches, as I was this morning to get on a pair of cloth shoes as big as Jack Harris's: this joy may be the spirits of dotage—but what signifies whence one is happy? Observe, too, that this is written with my own *right* hand, with the bootikin actually upon it, which has no distinction of fingers: so I no longer see any miracle in Buckinger,[1] who was famous for writing without hands or *feet;* as it was indifferent which one uses, provided one has a pair of either. Take notice, I write so much better without fingers than with, that I advise *you* to try a bootikin. To be sure, the operation is a little slower; but to a prisoner, the duration of his amusement is of far more consequence than the vivacity of it.

Last night I received your very kind, I might say *your* letter *tout court*, of Christmas-day. By this time I trust you are quite out of pain about me. My fit has been as regular as possible; only, as if the bootikins were post-horses, it made the grand tour of all my limbs in three weeks. If it will always use the same expedition, I am content it should take the journey once in two years. You must not mind my breast: it was always the weakest part of a very weak system; yet did not suffer now by the gout, but in consequence of it; and would not have been near so bad, if I could have kept from talking and dictating letters. The moment I am out of pain, I am in high spirits; and though I never take any medicines, there is one thing absolutely necessary to be put into my mouth—a gag. At present, the town is so empty that my tongue is a sinecure.

I am well acquainted with the Bibliothèque du Roi, and the medals, and the prints. I spent an entire day in looking over the English portraits, and kept the librarian without his dinner till dark night, till I was satisfied. Though the Choiseuls[2] will not *acquaint* with you, I hope their Abbé Barthelemi[3] is not put under the same quarantine Besides great learning, he has infinite wit and *polissonnerie*, and is one of the best kind of men in the world. As to the

[1] See vol. iv. p. 159.—Cunningham.

[2] Mr. Conway and the ladies of his party had met with the most flattering and distinguished reception at Paris from everybody but the Duc and Duchesse de Choiseul, who rather seemed to decline their acquaintance.—Berry.

[3] The author of the 'Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis.'—Walpole.

grandpapa,[1] *il ne nous aime pas nous autres*, and has never forgiven Lord Chatham. Though exceedingly agreeable himself, I don't think his taste exquisite. Perhaps I was piqued; but he seemed to like Wood better than any of us. Indeed, I am a little afraid that my dear friend's impetuous zeal may have been a little too prompt in pressing you upon them *d'abord* :—but don't say a word of this—it is her great goodness.—I thank you a million of times for all yours to her :—she is perfectly grateful for it. The Chevalier's[2] verses are pretty enough. I own I like Saurin's[3] much better than you seem to do. Perhaps I am prejudiced by the curse on the Chancellor at the end.

Not a word of news here. In a sick room one hears all there is, but I have not heard even a lie; but as this will not set out these three days, it is to be hoped some charitable Christian will tell a body one. Lately indeed we heard that the King of Spain had abdicated; but I believe it was some stockjobber that had deposed him.

Lord George Cavendish, for my solace in my retirement, has given me a book, the 'History of (his own) Furness-abbey,' written by a Scotch ex-Jesuit.[4] I cannot say that this unnatural conjunction of a Cavendish and a Jesuit has produced a lively colt; but I found one passage worth any money. It is an extract of a constable's journal kept during the civil war; and ends thus: "And there was never heard of such troublesome and distracted times as these five years have been, *but especially for constables*." It is so natural, that *inconvenient to my Lord Castlecomer* is scarce a better proverb.

Pray tell Lady Ailesbury that though she has been so very good to me, I address my letters to you rather than to her, because my pen is not always upon its guard, but is apt to say whatever comes into its nib; and then if she peeps over your shoulder, I am *censé* not to know it. Lady Harriet's [Stanhope's] wishes have done me great good:

[1] A name given to the Duc de Choiseul by Madame du Deffand.—Walpole.

[2] Verses written by the Chevalier de Boufflers, to be presented by Madame du Deffand to the Duke and Duchess of Choiseul. They are mere *vers de société*, and would not be tolerable out of the society for which they were written.—Berry.

[3] They were addressed to M. de Malesherbes, then premier president de la Cour des Aides; afterwards, still more distinguished by his having been the intrepid advocate chosen by the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth on his trial. He soon after perished by the same guillotine, from which he could not preserve his ill-fated master.—Berry.

[4] 'The Antiquities of Furness; or, an Account of the Royal Abbey of St. Mary, in the vale of Nightshade, near Dalton, in Furness.' London, 1774, 4to: dedicated to Lord George Cavendish, and written by Thomas West.—Wright.

nothing but a father's gout could be obdurate enough to resist them. My Mrs. Damer says nothing to me; but I give her intentions credit, and lay her silence on you.

January 1, 1775, *and a happy new year.*

I walk! I walk! walk alone!—I have been five times quite round my rooms to-day, and my month is not up! The day after to-morrow I shall go down into the dining-room; the next week to take the air; and then if Mrs. * * * * is very pressing, why, I don't know what may happen. Well! but you want news, there are none to be had. They think there is a ship lost with Gage's despatches. Lady Temple gives all her diamonds to Miss Nugent.[1] Lord Pigot lost 400*l.* the other night at Princess Amelia's. Miss Davis[2] has carried her cause against Mrs. Yates, and is to sing again at the Opera. This is all my coffee-house furnished this morning.

1476. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 1, 1775.

This morning, Madam, as soon as my eyes opened, Philip [his servant] stood before me, bearing in one hand a shining vest, and in the other a fair epistle, written in celestial characters, which, however, it was given me to understand.

The present, I saw, came from no mortal hand, and seemed to be the boon of all the gods, or rather of all the goddesses; for there was taste, fancy, delicacy, flattery, wit, and sentiment in it, and so artfully blended, that no celestial in breeches could possibly have mixed so bewitching a potion. Venus had chosen the pattern, Flora painted the roses after those at Paphos, Minerva had worked the tambour part, Clio wrote the ode, and Thalia took off the majestic stiffness of the original sketch by breathing her own ease all over it.

These visions naturally presented themselves. I told you, Madam, I was but just awake, and at that hour, somehow or other, one's head is very apt to be full of Venus and such pretty figures. Vanity soon took their place, and, not to be unworthy of my visitants, I held up my head, and thought it became so favoured a personage as

[1] Mary, only daughter and heiress of Robert Earl Nugent, married in 1775 to George Grenville, second Earl Temple.—Wright.

[2] See p. 25.—Cunningham.

myself to assume a loftier port, and behave like my predecessors who had been honoured in the same manner.

Was I more like Æneas when his mother brought him armour of heavenly temper, or like Paris when three divinities exerted all their charms and all their artifices to ensnare his partiality? To be sure I could have been simple enough to be content with the character of Horatius Flaccus, with which my patronesses had hailed me; but when I ordered Philip to reach me my lyre, that I might pour out a rapturous epode or secular hymn in gratitude, he said, "Lord! sir, you know Horace's lyre is at Ampthill."

What follows is more melancholy. I rose; the first object was to examine more attentively the inspired vest in the full sun against which it shone gorgeously; but, alas! as I crept to the window, in the glass I beheld—what do you think, Madam?—such an emaciated, wan, wrinkled, poor skeleton, that—O! adieu, visions, goddesses, odes, vests of roses, and immortal Strawberry!—I thought I saw a thinner Don Quixote attired by the Duchess for sport. Shocked, sunk from my altitudes, and shrinking into myself, I bade Philip Pança fold up the vest, and vowed never to dress up my ghost-like Adonis, but to consecrate the dear work of dear fingers to the single word (I will believe in the charming ode) Friendship; and may the memory of that word, the vest and the ode, exist when Strawberry Hill, its tinsel glories and its master, are remembered no where else!

1477. TO JOHN CRAWFURD, ESQ.[1]

Arlington Street, Jan. 2, 1775.

I WAS not surprised, but rather the more grateful because I was not surprised, at your kind letter. I am totally recovered, excepting my right hand: I walk without a stick; nay, am told look as well as ever I did, which never could be a compliment to me in any part of my life. However, as I advance with dignity I shall descend to the first floor but to-morrow, finding it in vain to wait till I am *sent for;* a mishap that has befallen greater folk than me. Still I am content with being confined but five weeks, instead of five months; and though it will make the faculty more violent than ever against

[1] Now first published. Mr. Crawfurd was at this time at Lord Spencer's, at Althorp.—CUNNINGHAM.

the bootikins, me at least they shall not persuade out of them; and though they will be ready to poison me for speaking the truth, it shall not be by any of their own potions.

I hope you have been diverted with your tour, and I am sure you are always the better for being diverted. I have received a charming present, and more charming verses from Ampthill. You shall see both at your return, if you have not already seen them.

Tuesday, 3rd.

Cybèle va descendre; that is, an old woman, or an old man, which is the same thing, is come down stairs and writes to you with his own hand, which goddesses never do but when they assume a mortal shape, and then billets-doux and all the rest follow of course. Indeed, there is more of the goddess than the woman in my partiality for you. I doubt your *petite santé* would tempt no ancient dame to choose you for her Atys, though a divinity who would know the goodness of your heart would prefer you to Hercules. All this rigmarole is only to tell you I am much better, and

Very sincerely yours,
WALPOLE.

1478. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1775.

I EVERY day intended to thank you for the copy of Nell Gwyn's letter, till it was too late; the gout came, and made me moult my goose-quill. The letter is very curious, and I am as well content as with the original. It is lucky you do not care for news more recent than the reformation. I should have none to tell you; nay, nor earlier neither. Mr. Strutt's[1] second volume I suppose you have seen. He showed me two or three much better drawings from pictures in the possession of Mr. Ives. One of them made me very happy: it is a genuine portrait of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and is the individual same face as that I guessed to be his in my Marriage of Henry VI. They are infinitely more like each other than any two modern portraits of one person by different painters. I have been laughed at for thinking the skull of Duke Humphrey at St. Alban's proved my guess; and yet it certainly does, and is the more

[1] His 'Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits, &c. of the Inhabitants of England, from the arrival of the Saxons till the reign of Henry VIII.; with a short Account of the Britons during the Government of the Romans.'—WRIGHT.

like, as the two portraits represent him very bald, with only a ringlet of hair, as monks have. Mr. Strutt is going to engrave his drawings.

Yours faithfully.

1479. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Jan. 9, 1775.

I WRITE without having anything to say, but what I know you will like better than news. I am quite recovered of the gout, except in the hand I write with, and which you see cannot be very bad. The bootikins have proved themselves to demonstration. I had the gout in both hands, both feet, both elbows, and one wrist, and yet could walk without a stick in less than a month, and have been abroad twice in less than five weeks. It came in each part as rapidly as it could, and went away so too; and though I had some acute pain, much less in quantity than in any fit these ten years. Now, if less pain, and five weeks instead of five months and a half, as the last fit was, be not demonstration, there is none in Euclid.

The bootikins do not cure the gout, but if they defer it, lessen it, shorten it, who would not wear them? Why, fine people, younger people, who will not condescend to lie like a mummy; nay, nor anybody else, for the physicians and apothecaries, who began by recommending them, now, finding they are a specific, cry them down—and will be believed, precisely because they lie; they say they weaken; it is false; I can at this moment stamp on the marble hearth with both feet with no more inconvenience than I did at five-and-twenty, which I never saw one other person that could do, who had the gout a twelvemonth before. I do this ten times a-day, to convince people; yet, what is ocular proof against the assertion of a grave face and a tied wig? If weakness were the consequence, who would be weakened so soon as I, who have bones no bigger than a lark's? I want to send you a cargo of bootikins; tell me the shortest way of conveying them. Your brother is one of the bigoted infidels; can one wonder that the three professions make so many dupes, when pain cannot open the understanding? Sure the Devil's three names of Satan, Beelzebub, and Lucifer, were given to him in his three capacities of priest, physician, and lawyer! It is certainly true that there are apothecaries in London who have given noxious drugs under the name of James's Powders, to decry the latter. I did not think there could be a *trade* so bad as a

profession, till I heard that the fishmongers in town here, fling away great quantities of fish that it may never be cheap. What a wicked monster is a great metropolis!

I rejoice that you have resolved to avow your *nepotism:* it may be a bar to your obtaining the Papacy, but sounds well in this Protestant country, and I am sure will turn out to your mind's satisfaction, though it may be a little interruption to your quiet.

This is a short letter, but I call it an intercalated one. There will probably be enough, and too much to send you soon—but till the Parliament meets, all is suspense! I hope decision will not follow *in haste!* The moment is very big; and if anybody is wise enough to see a quick solution of all the difficulties, they are much more intuitive than my comprehension.

Lord Lincoln[1] marries my cousin, Lady Frances Conway;[2] she is a sweet young woman in person, temper, and understanding, and deserves such vast fortune. Adieu!

1480. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 12, 1775.

You wanted to see my handwriting again, Madam, and now you will be tired of it; but I have this instant received Miss Vernon's pretty fable and verses, and can I help thanking her and you as quick as possible? There is a natural simplicity in her fable, that pleases me infinitely more, than if she had gathered a nosegay of poetic words, and only disposed them in a new garland, as young shepherdesses that read romances generally do, and without genuine invention. As she shows parts and observation, the embroidery will come of itself afterwards. To the praises she bestows on me, I am very sensible, because I am sure they flow from a kind and amiable heart, — rather, from a complimentary one; but pray, Madam, tell her that I have neither acquired fame nor can bestow it, and that my name is Horace, only because I had godfathers and godmothers, and not because I have the least resemblance to a very great poet so called, any more than I should have to the apostle, if I had been christened Matthew. When I am likened to my heathen predecessor, it only reminds me of my infinite inferiority, and

[1] Eldest son of Henry Clinton, Duke of Newcastle.—WALPOLE.

[2] Fourth daughter of Francis Seymour Conway, Earl of Hertford, nephew of Catherine Shorter Lady Walpole, first wife of Sir Robert.—WALPOLE.

would not be allowed any where but at the puppet-show-Parnassus at Bath-Easton. I have just got Mrs. Miller's bouquet of artificial flowers, and have only had time to dip upon it, and see how very ridiculous compliments undeserved may make one! You will there see how immortality is plentifully promised to riddles and *bouts-rimes*, and a jar dressed up with ribbons. I once did wish for fame, I own—now I dread it; for it is like diamonds, of little value, unless of the first water,—and who would be fine in Bristol stones?

Pray, Madam, send me all the productions of Ampthill. Everything is agreeable of one's own society, and when it means to go no farther. I think this is all that is left me that I care for, or have any eagerness about,—and I am sure that I read with any pleasure. What should I read else? I know all that can be told me of the periods I delight in. I can scarce read Grammont and Madame de Sevigné,[1] because I know them by heart. Can I pore over American disputes, which I never did nor ever shall understand? Do I care for hearing how many ways Mr. Burke can make a mosaic pavement or an inlaid cabinet? Can I be diverted with Mr. Cumberland's comedies, or Garrick's nonsensical epilogues? No! truly. I am almost as sick of our literature, as of our politics and politicians; and, therefore, if you have any charity, my lady, send me all the Ampthilliana, or rather bring them to Grosvenor Place, which I promise to be reconciled to, and where we will not make a Helicon of tin and a Parnassus of pasteboard. Let us leave the whole Castalian State to the Bufos and Bufesses,[2] and divert ourselves without trusting posterity with our secrets.

1481. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY AND LADY AYLESBURY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 15, 1775.

You have made me very happy by saying your journey to Naples is laid aside. Perhaps it made too great an impression on me; but you must reflect, that all my life I have satisfied myself with your being perfect, instead of trying to be so myself. I don't ask you to return, though I wish it: in truth, there is nothing to invite you. I don't want you to come and breathe fire and sword against the Bostonians, like that second Duke of Alva, the inflexible Lord

[1] Would not 'Pepys' and 'Evelyn' have delighted him?—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] Alluding to Pope.—CUNNINGHAM.

George Germain; or to anathematise the Court and all its works, like the incorruptible Burke, who scorns lucre, except when he can buy a hundred thousand acres from naked Caribs for a song. I don't want you to do anything like a partyman. I trust you think of every party as I do, with contempt, from Lord Chatham's mustard-bowl down to Lord Rockingham's hartshorn. All, perhaps, will be tried in their turns, and yet, if they had genius, might not be mighty enough to save us. From some ruin or other I think nobody can, and what signifies an option of mischiefs?

An account is come of the Bostonians having voted an army of sixteen thousand men, who are to be called *minutemen*, as they are to be ready at a minute's warning. Two directors or commissioners, I don't know what they are called, are appointed. There has been too a kind of mutiny in the Fifth regiment. A soldier was found drunk on his post. Gage, in his time of *danger*, thought rigour necessary, and sent the fellow to a court-martial. They ordered two hundred lashes. The General ordered them to improve their sentence. Next day it was published in the 'Boston Gazette.' He called them before him, and required them on oath to abjure the communication: three officers refused. Poor Gage is to be scape-goat, not for this, but for what was a reason against employing him, incapacity. I wonder at the precedent! Howe is talked of for his successor.—Well, I have done with *you!*—Now I shall go gossip with Lady Aylesbury.

You must know, Madam, that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new christened Helicon. Ten years ago there lived a Madam Riggs, an old rough humourist who passed for a wit; her daughter, who passed for nothing, married to a Captain Miller, full of good-natured officiousness. These good folks were friends of Miss Rich,[1] who carried me to dine with them at Bath-Easton, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mademoiselle Scuderi, and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey. The Captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù*, and that both may contribute to the

[1] Daughter of Sir Robert Rich, and sister to the second wife of George Lord Lyttelton.—WALPOLE.

improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimes* as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus fair every Thursday,[1] give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase dressed with pink ribbons and myrtles receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope Miller, kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this is fiction, or exaggeration. Be dumb, unbelievers! The collection is printed, published.[2]—Yes, on my faith, there are *bouts-rimes* on a buttered muffin, made by her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland;[3] receipts to make them by Corydon the venerable, alias George Pitt; others very pretty, by Lord Palmerston;[4] some by Lord Carlisle: many by Mrs. Miller herself, that have no fault but

[1] The late Lady Miller of Bath-Easton, near Bath, held an Assembly at that elegant villa once a fortnight during the Bath season. She rendered this meeting a poetical Institution, giving out subjects at each assembly for poems to be read at the ensuing one. The verses were deposited in an antique Etruscan vase, and were drawn out by gentlemen appointed to read them aloud, and to judge of their rival merits. These gentlemen, ignorant of the authors, selected three poems from the collection which they thought most worthy of the three Myrtle Wreaths decreed as the rewards and honours of the day. The names of the persons who had obtained the prizes were then announced by Lady Miller. Once a year the most ingenious of these productions were published. Four volumes have already appeared, and the profits been applied to the benefit of a charity at Bath; so that Lady Miller's institution was not only calculated to awaken and cultivate ingenuity, but to serve the purposes of benevolence and charity. It had continued about six years, and ceased with the death of its amiable patroness. That event happened in July, 1781.—*Miss Seward. Poem to the Memory of Lady Miller*, 1782, 4to.—Cunningham.

[2] They were published under the title of 'Poetical Amusements at a Villa near Bath.' An edition appeared in 1781, in four volumes.—Wright. Compare Letter to Conway, 9th of January, 1779.—Cunningham.

[3] "The pen which I now take and brandish
Has long lain useless in my standish.
Know, every maid, from her own patten,
To her who shines in glossy sattin,
That could they now prepare an oglio
From best receipt of book in folio,
Ever so fine, for all their puffing,
I should prefer a butter'd muffin;
A muffin Jove himself might feast on,
If eat with Miller at Batheaston."
—Wright.

[4] The following are the concluding lines of a poem on Beauty, by Lord Palmerston:—

"In vain the stealing hand of Time
May pluck the blossoms of their prime;
Envy may talk of bloom decay'd,
How lilies droop and roses fade;

wanting metre; an Immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted, there never was anything so entertaining or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling.[1]

Jan. 17.

Before I could finish this, I received your despatches by Sir Thomas Clarges, and a most entertaining letter in three tomes. It is being very dull, not to be able to furnish a quarter so much from your own country—but what can I do? You are embarked in a new world, and I am living on the scraps of an old one of which I am tired. The best I can do is to reply to your letter, and not attempt to amuse you when I have nothing to say. I think the Parliament meets to-day, or in a day or two—but I hope you are coming. —Your brother says so, and Madame du Deffand says so; and sure it is time to leave Paris, when you know ninety of the inhabitants.[2] There seems much affectation in those that will not know you;[3] and affectation is always a littleness—it has been even rude; but to be sure the rudeness one feels least is that which is addressed to one before there has been any acquaintance.

Ninon came,[4] because, on Madame du Deffand's mentioning it, I concluded it a new work, and am disappointed. I can say this by heart. The picture of Madame de Prie, which you don't seem to value (and so Madame du Deffand says) I believe I shall dispute

> But Constancy's unalter'd truth,
> Regardful of the vows of youth—
> Affection that recalls the past,
> And bids the pleasing influence last,
> Shall still preserve the lover's flame
> In every scene of life the same;
> And still with fond endearments blend
> The wife, the mistress, and the friend!"
>
> —Wright.

[1] "Lady Miller's collection of verses by fashionable people, which were put into her vase at Bath-Easton, in competition for honorary prizes, being mentioned, Dr. Johnson held them very cheap: 'Bouts-rimés,' said he, 'is a mere conceit, and an old conceit; I wonder how people were persuaded to write in that manner for this lady.' I named a gentleman of his acquaintance who wrote for the vase. Johnson—'He was a blockhead for his pains!' Boswell—'The Duchess of Northumberland wrote.' Johnson—'Sir, the Duchess of Northumberland may do what she pleases; nobody will say anything to a lady of her high rank: but I should be apt to throw * * * verses in his face.'" *Boswell*, vol. v. p. 227.—Wright.

[2] Madame du Deffand, writing of General Conway to Walpole, had said—"Savez-vous combien il connait déja de personnes dans Paris? Quatre-vingt dix. Il n'est nullement sauvage."—Wright.

[3] The Duc de Choiseul.—Walpole.

[4] The Life of Ninon de l'Enclos.—Walpole.

with you; I think it charming, but when offered to me years ago, I would not take it—it was now given to you a little *à mon intention.*

I am sorry that, amongst all the verses you have sent me, you should have forgotten what you commend the most, *Les trois exclamations:* I hope you will bring them with you. Voltaire's are intolerably stupid, and not above the level of officers in garrison. Some of M. de Pezay's are very pretty, though there is too much of them; and in truth I had seen them before. Those on Madame de la Vallière pretty too, but one is a little tired of Venus and the Graces.[1] I am most pleased with your own—and if you have a mind to like them still better, make Madame du Deffand show you mine, which are neither French, nor measure, nor metre.[2] She is unwilling to tell me so; which diverts me. Yours are really genteel and new.

I envy you the Russian Anecdotes[3] more than 'M. de Chamfort's Fables,' of which I know nothing; and as you say no more, I conclude I lose not much. The stories of Sir Charles[4] are so far not new to me, that I heard them of him from abroad after he was mad: but I believe no mortal of his acquaintance ever heard them before; nor did they at all correspond with his former life, with his treatment of his wife, or his history with Mrs. Woffington [the actress] *qui n'était pas dupe.* I say nothing on the other stories you tell me of billets dropped,[5] *et pour cause.*

I think I have touched all your paragraphs, and have nothing new to send you in return. In truth, I go nowhere but into private rooms; for I am not enough recovered to re-launch into the world, when I have so good an excuse for avoiding it. The bootikins have done wonders; but even two or three such victories will cost too dear. I submit very patiently to my lot. I am old and broken, and it never was my system to impose upon myself when one can deceive nobody else. I have spirits enough for my use, that is, amongst my friends and contemporaries: I like young people and their happiness for everything but to live with; but I cannot learn their language,

[1] In this, at least, Walpole agreed with Johnson. See Johnson's 'Life of Prior.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] See Walpole's works, vol. v. p. 185.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] The account of the revolution in Russia which placed Catherine II. on the throne, by M. de la Rulhière, afterwards published. Mr. Conway had heard it read in manuscript in a private society.—BERRY.

[4] Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.—WALPOLE.

[5] This alludes to circumstances Mr. Conway mentions as having taken place at a ball at Versailles.—WALPOLE.

nor tell them old stories, of which I must explain every step as I go.[1] Politics, the proper resource of age, I detest—I am contented, but see few that are so—and I never will be led by any man's self-interest. A great scene is opening, of which I cannot expect to see the end; I am pretty sure not a happy end—so that, in short, I am determined to think the rest of my life but a postscript: and as this has been too long an one, I will wish you good night, repeating what you know already, that the return of you three is the most agreeable prospect I expect to see realised Adieu!

1482. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 15, 1775.

I AM glad I opened the letter myself, Madam; I would not have had Kirgate [his printer and amanuensis] see it for the world, and therefore attempt to write an answer in my lap with only one hand. If no man is a hero in the eyes of his valet de chambre, what must a miserable author be in those of his printer! You think you have sent me some very pretty verses, Madam, and so you have—very pretty indeed; for poetry can create, paint, or call from the grave, and the less solidity there is in the vision, the more enchanting are its hues: but if truth presents its glass, the rainbow disappears. and nothing remains but what I have found, *Verses on a Death's head!* —and *my immortal fame* may walk perhaps to the publication of the next monthly Magazine. In serious earnest, I do think it is such an impertinence in every little scribbler in a parish to accept new-year's gifts of immortal fame from their friends, that, at the risk of ingratitude, I must protest against the practice.

As an antiquary, Madam, I am better diverted. I can but imagine how the grave professors of our mystery will be embarrassed a thousand years hence (which is all the portion of futurity in my disposal) to discover who the immortal man was that will live only in your ladyship's lines. Nay, what if the reverse of your compliment should happen, and the author should only be discovered by his printer! Such mortifications have happened to as great German and Batavian wits as I am, and therefore I beg, Madam, you will treat my co-labourer Kirgate with more respect, as, should fame

[1] And yet he would tell and *write* old stories, and in his old age his delightful 'Reminiscences' to two young ladies.—CUNNINGHAM.

happen to have a library of rare editions, I may be admitted there only under his auspices. Upon the whole, to your Ladyship and him I commit the whole reversion of my future renown, where I am sure it will be in better hands than in my own; and I do hereby appoint and declare my said loving Muse and faithful Printer joint executrix and executor of this my last will and testament, written all with my own hand this fifteenth day of January, in the first and last year of my immortality, and in the no less immortal reign of G. III., by the want of grace late King of France and America, &c.

1483. TO H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

Sir: *Jan.* 17, 1775.

Your Royal Highness's commands are so much a law to me, that though deeply conscious of the inequality of my understanding to so arduous a question, and full of fears lest a word should drop from me that should lead your Royal Highness into any step prejudicial to yourself, or to the Princesses, your daughters, I venture to lay my thoughts at your Royal Highness's feet, only intreating, if they appear to have any weight in them, that your Royal Highness would not adopt them till they have been approved by better judgments than mine.

Before I speak, Sir, on the question whether your Royal Highness should take any measure in Parliament for procuring a provision for your family, permit me, Sir, to state an apprehension that has struck me from the conversation I had the honour of having with you the last time I saw you. Your Royal Highness expressed doubts whether there might not be some idea of calling the legitimacy of your children in question. Alas! Sir, if it is possible that any human mind should have such an idea, would not a motion in Parliament be the likeliest method of bringing that horrid intention into execution? The Parliament is so infamous, that it could, I firmly believe, be brought to lend its assistance to anything. As your Royal Highness's hint of carrying any part of your cause thither, has not alarmed, may one not suppose, that, not alarming, it pleases? What will either House not do? What has either refused to do? Consider, Sir, how many would be glad to colour over their mean desertion or neglect of you, by calling into question the validity of your marriage, and consequently of the birth of your children. Shame is apt to fly to crimes for a veil. I have

no difficulty in speaking on this question: your Royal Highness must authenticate the legitimacy of your children, before you think of a provision for them. I rest it there, Sir, not to trouble you with unnecessary words.

In regard to the question your Royal Highness was pleased to put to me, on some motion for a provision, I will consider it in two lights; in the first, whether it would be proper for any Lords to take it up. This, Sir, I am sorry to say, lies in a small compass, and extends to a very few Lords in the Opposition; your Royal Highness knows already my opinion, that a few opposing Lords would only do your cause signal mischief, and would give the pretended sanction, that I fear is wished for, to doing nothing for you; and, therefore, if I am not wrong, not to be attempted. The Duke of R. with whom I have talked, fears nothing, Sir, but hurting your cause. He is so personally obnoxious, that he thinks a motion from your Royal Highness and himself would only be considered, certainly represented, as factious; his Grace's tenderness and delicacy would not suffer him to add, that none of his friends would support him, though he knows they would not. What could be expected, Sir, from a measure so generally abandoned? When could it be revived with success, unless, not only times, but men should be totally altered?

I can then, Sir, have but one idea left, the same I suggested on Monday, if your Royal Highness should still think the present season a proper one, though it is probable that nothing will be stirred this year in relation to an increase of the revenue of the Crown. I must throw myself on your Royal Highness's great goodness and generosity before I presume to utter what I have further to say. You have indeed, Sir, commanded me, given me leave to speak what I think, and I dare not at such a crisis but speak what I think. Be not offended, Sir; my heart burns to serve you, but I will not waste your time on my idle apologies. My sincerity must be proved by my actions.

I have said, Sir, how infamous I think Parliaments. I have not so bad an opinion of all mankind in general. Humanity can operate when interest is silent. It seems essential, in my opinion, to any future service, that your Royal Highness may reap from a motion in Parliament, that the cry of mankind should be raised loud in your favour. That can only be excited by stating your sufferings and by being able to prove that you have done everything in your power to reconcile His Majesty, and to deprecate his anger. The plan I should humbly offer to your Royal Highness for your conduct, will

best explain my meaning, laying it before you, Sir, with the utmost deference and diffidence; far from presuming to dictate, but obeying from perfect submission.

I should begin, Sir, by writing an ostensible letter to the King, asking pardon for a natural youthful error, regretting his displeasure, intreating a return of his fraternal affections, stating my own ill-health, and how much that must be augmented by his resentment, and at least imploring he would give that relief to a sick body and wounded mind of promising he would make a proper provision for persons so dear to me as my wife and children. As heightening the picture a little would not add to your Royal Highness's disorder, I would beg the comfort of taking leave of him in so critical a situation of my health. If this should have no effect, Sir, I would just before leaving England, in my place in the House of Lords, acquaint their Lordships, that I was grieved His Majesty was so much offended at a youthful error, which, as it was neither repugnant to religion nor law at that time, I had flattered myself had not been irremissible; that I had done but what the heir of the Crown, James II., when Duke of York, had done, and been forgiven, and what had very frequently been done by other princes of the royal blood, and by kings of England themselves; that I had never refused any match that had been proposed, and had only chosen for myself when no wife had been sought for me; that I had preferred legal matrimony to the dissoluteness of youth; that I had selected a woman of blameless virtue, and that I had done what their Lordships could not disapprove,—I had chosen a lady from their own class, into which Princes of the Blood used to marry. I would then acquaint them with the steps I had in vain taken for reconciliation. I would intreat them to be mediators with the King for remission of my fault in marrying without his approbation: I would acquaint them with the precarious state of my health, which obliged me to leave the kingdom and my family unprovided for, and I would beg them, as Christian Peers and His Majesty's Great Council, to endeavour to repair the breaches in the royal family; and if anything should happen to me, to intercede with His Majesty's piety and forgiveness to make a suitable provision for two innocent young Princesses of his own blood, who had never offended him; and I would add, that to avoid any suspicion of intending to disturb His Majesty's mind, I declined making any present parliamentary application for my children, but would leave to the wisdom of their Lordships to take the most proper time of being intercessors for me and my family

with my royal brother. This address, Sir, to the Lords I would deliver in writing, and would desire it might be entered on the Journals; I would then retire and leave them.

But now, Sir, after taking such a latitude of liberty, whom shall I intreat to be intercessor for me with your Royal Highness? Your own excellent heart, Sir. No, you cannot be offended at zeal, even if it has passed its due bounds. On my soul, Sir, I think that what I have said is the best method I can desire for obtaining your Royal Highness's object. No high-flown loyalty nor grovelling self-interest has dictated my words. If Parliament is against you, the majority of mankind must be gained over by acting as they would advise. If I advise you, Sir, to stoop beyond what your Royal Highness would suggest, it is for the sake of your children, who will plead when I fail. If you are in the right in the world's eye, whatever it costs your feeling, it will be of use to them. The circumstances may change; your health, I trust in God, will be re-established, and the more sacrifices you have made, the higher you will stand in the esteem of mankind. I still flatter myself you will enjoy all the happiness and dignity due to your virtues and birth. I am not likely to see that moment, nor should I profit by it if I did,—but I have done my duty as your true servant, and if I was now at my last hour, I could not give you any other advice than what I now presume to lay at your feet.

P.S. If your Royal Highness should deem this advice timid, I beg, Sir, it may be tried by this test, whether your Royal Highness thinks that any one of your enemies would be glad I had given this advice: undoubtedly, Sir, the more you take care to be in the right yourself, the more you put those who hurt you with the King in the wrong.

1484. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 21, 1775.

No; I will never read nonsense again with a settled resolution of being diverted! The 'Miscellany' from Bath-Easton is ten degrees duller than a Magazine, and, which is wondrous, the Noble Authors it adds to my 'Catalogue' are the best of this foolish Parnassus. There is one very pretty copy by Lord Palmerston; and the Duchess of Northumberland has got very jollily through her task. I have scarce been better diverted by Dr. Johnson's 'Tour to the Western Isles.' What a heap of words to express very little! and though it

is the least cumbrous of any style he ever used, how far from easy and natural! He hopes nobody but is glad that a boatful of sacrilege, a diverting sin! was shipwrecked. He believes in second sight, and laughs at poor Pennant for credulity! The King sent for the book in MS., and then wondering, said, "I protest, Johnson seems to be a Papist and a Jacobite!"—so he did not know why he had been made to give him a pension!

I must cross the sea, Madam, if I tell you anything better, and so I will. One of the ladies to the Queen of France announced to her that the Comtesse d'Artois was breeding. The Queen was a little piqued and envious; and to conceal it said, "I wonder what the child will be called?" The lady answered, "I hope, Madam, *Le Precurseur.*"

This story is only the precursor of one ten thousand times better, which I reserved. The Comte d'Artois, forgetting that his brother is King, treats him with all the familiarity of their nursery. It was thought necessary to correct this; and M. de Maurepas was commissioned to give the hint. Being urged, he said, the King would grow offended. "Well," said the Prince, "and if he is, *que peut-il me faire?*" "*Vous pardonner, Monseigneur,*" replied the Minister. If you don't admire this more than any reply in your Diogenes Laertius and ancient authors, I will never tell your ladyship another modern story.

Well! I am come back to England, and here I find no bad saying of an English Queen. The crowd at the birthday was excessive, and had squeezed, and shoved, and pressed upon the Queen in the most hoyden manner. As she went out of the drawing-room, somebody said in flattery, "the crowd was very great."—"Yes," said the Queen, "and wherever one went, the Queen was in everybody's way."

I have written this since I came home to-night, Thursday, on my way towards Saturday's post, that I might not forget the *bons-mots* I had collected for my gazette. To-morrow, I expect, will produce longer speeches.

I know what I know. To-morrow is to happen a great event—I will not tell you what, till I know myself what it does produce. If it was not too late for the post, I would send away my letter this instant, that I might keep your ladyship and lordship in expectation for a whole night. Now I think of it, I can send it away to-morrow, and keep all Ampthill in equal suspense. I believe I shall—I don't know whether I shall or not—well, I will consider of it.

1485. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

January 22, 1775.

After the magnificent overture for peace from Lord Chatham, that I announced to Madame du Deffand, you will be most impatient for my letter. *Ohimè!* you will be sadly disappointed. Instead of drawing a circle with his wand round the House of Lords, and ordering them to pacify America, on the terms he prescribed before they ventured to quit the circumference of his commands, he brought a ridiculous, uncommunicated, unconsulted notion for addressing the King immediately to withdraw the troops from Boston, as an earnest of lenient measures. The Opposition stared and shrugged; the courtiers stared and laughed. His own two or three adherents left him, except Lord Camden and Lord Shelburne, and except Lord Temple, who is not his adherent, and was not there. Himself was not much animated, but very hostile; particularly on Lord Mansfield, who had taken care not to be there. He talked of three millions of Whigs in America, and told the Ministers they were checkmated and had not a move left to make. Lord Camden was as strong. Lord Suffolk was thought to do better than ever, and Lord Lyttelton's declamation was commended as usual. At last, Lord Rockingham, very punily, and the Duke of Richmond joined and supported the motion; but at eight at night it was rejected by 68 to 18, though the Duke of Cumberland voted for it.[1]

[1] In the 'Chatham Correspondence' will be found another, and a very different account of this debate, in a letter to Lady Chatham, from their son William:—"Nothing," he says, "prevented my father's speech from being the most forcible that can be imagined, and the administration fully felt it. The matter and manner were striking; far beyond what I can express. It was everything that was superior; and though it had not the desired effect on an obdurate House of Lords, it must have an infinite effect without doors, the bar being crowded with Americans, &c. Lord Suffolk, I cannot say answered him, but spoke after him. He was a contemptible orator indeed, with paltry matter and a whining delivery. Lord Shelburne spoke well, and supported the motion warmly. Lord Camden was supreme, with only one exception, and as zealous as possible. Lord Rockingham spoke shortly, but sensibly; and the Duke of Richmond well, and with much candour as to the Declaratory Act. Upon the whole, it was a noble debate. The ministry were violent beyond expectation, almost to madness: instead of recalling the troops now there, they talked of sending more. My father has had no pain, but is lame in one ankle near the instep from standing so long. No wonder he is lame: his first speech lasted above an hour, and the second half an hour—surely, the two finest speeches that ever were made before, unless by himself!" Dr. Franklin too, who heard the debate, says, in reference to Lord Chatham's speech—"I am filled with admiration of that truly great man. I have

This interlude would be only entertaining, if the scene was not so totally gloomy. The Cabinet have determined on civil war, and regiments are going from Ireland and our West Indian islands. On Thursday the plan of the war is to be laid before both Houses.

To-morrow the Merchants carry their petition; which, I suppose, will be coolly received, since, if I hear true, the system is to cut off all traffic with America at present—as, you know, we can revive it when we please. There! there is food for meditation! Your reflections, as you understand the subject better than I do, will go further than mine could. Will the French you converse with be civil and keep their countenances?

George Damer[1] t'other day proclaimed your departure for the 25th; but the Duchess of Richmond received a whole cargo of letters from ye all on Friday night, which talk of a fortnight or three weeks longer. Pray remember it is not decent to be dancing at Paris, when there is a civil war in your own country. You would be like the country squire, who passed by with his hounds as the battle of Edgehill began.

Jan. 24.

I am very sorry to tell you the Duke of Gloucester is dying. About three weeks ago the physicians said it was absolutely necessary for him to go abroad immediately. He dallied, but was actually preparing. He now cannot go, and probably will not live many days, as he has had two shivering fits, and the physicians give the Duchess no hopes.[2] Her affliction and courage are not to be described; they take their turns as she is in the room with him or not. His are still greater. His heart is broken, and yet his firmness and coolness amazing. I pity her beyond measure; and it is not a time to blame her having accepted an honour which so few women could have resisted, and scarce one ever has resisted.

The London and Bristol Merchants carried their petitions yesterday to the House of Commons. The Opposition contended for their being heard by *the* committee of the whole House, who are to consider the American papers; but the Court sent them to *a* committee,[3] after a debate till nine at night, with nothing very

seen, in the course of my life, sometimes eloquence without wisdom, and often wisdom without eloquence: in the present instance, I see both united, and both, as I think, in the highest degree possible." Vol. iv. pp. 375, 385.—WRIGHT.

[1] Afterwards second Earl of Dorchester.—WRIGHT.

[2] His Royal Highness survived this illness more than thirty years.—WRIGHT.

[3] This committee was wittily called by Mr. Burke, and afterwards generally known as, "the Committee of Oblivion."—WRIGHT.

remarkable, on divisions of 197 to 81, and 192 to 65. Lord Stanley[1] spoke for the first time; his voice and manner pleased, but his matter was not so successful. Dowdeswell[2] is dead, and Tom Hervey.[3] The latter sent for his wife and acknowledged her. Don't forget to inform me when my letters must stop. Adieu! Yours ever.

1486. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Jan. 24, 1775.

I RETURN the rebus, which I forgot to commend as it deserves, having seen it before; but I cannot tell my stories now, having much more melancholy employment. The Duke of Gloucester is dying; the physicians have no hopes, nor the poor Duchess! Though I am a bad courtier, I must be a good uncle; and even a good courtier, when I can never be rewarded for it.

The House of Commons sat till past nine last night on petitions; but the newspapers are now tolerable journals. Lord Stanley spoke for the first time and pleased by his manner: his matter, they say, would have pleased as well on any other day.

The Cophthi were an Egyptian race, of whom nobody knows anything but the learned; and thence I gave Mrs. Montagu's 'Academics' the name of Coptic, a derivation not worth repeating or explaining. Tom Hervey is dead; after sending for his wife and re-acknowledging her in pathetic heroics.

1487. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Jan. 25, 1775.

THE Duke of Gloucester is very ill. Had I begun my letter last night, I should have said, extremely ill. It was reported and believed that he was dead; but he slept eight hours last night, and his pulse was better this morning. The physicians, who gave no hopes yesterday, say to-night, that they never saw any mortal symptoms. Be assured they speak as little truth of the past as

[1] Afterwards Earl of Derby.—WRIGHT.

[2] The Right Hon. William Dowdeswell, of Pull Court, member for the county of Worcester.—WRIGHT.

[3] Second son of John, first Earl of Bristol. See vol. i. p. 101.—CUNNINGHAM.

they know of what is to come. The Duke has been declining this month; and he was ordered to go abroad immediately, but delayed —and now is not able to go. I hope in God he will get strength enough—I wish him abroad for every reason. The other Duke, his brother [Duke of Cumberland], has erected his standard in opposition, and though the Duke of Gloucester is too wise, I trust, to take such a part, he would be teazed to death with the politics of the Luttrels, and had better be out of the way.

The times are indeed very serious. Pacification with America is not the measure adopted. More regiments are ordered thither, and to-morrow a plan, I fear equivalent to a declaration of war, is to be laid before both Houses. They are bold Ministers, methinks, who do not hesitate on a civil war, in which victory may bring ruin, and disappointment endanger their heads. Lord Chatham has already spoken out: and though his outset [a motion in the Lords last Friday] was neither wise nor successful, he will certainly be popular again with the clamorous side, which no doubt will become the popular side too, for all wars are costly, and consequently grievous Acquisition alone can make those burthens palatable; and in a war with our own Colonies we must afflict instead of acquiring them, and cannot recover them without having undone them. I am still to learn wisdom and experience, if these things are not so.

I thank you much for the opera of the Conclave. It loses greatly of its spirit by my unacquaintance with the *dramatis personæ*. By the duration of the interregnum, I suppose there is a difficulty of choosing between the Crowns and the Jesuits; and the Cardinals more afraid of poison from the latter, than of the menaces of the former. Though old folks are not less ambitious than young, they have greater aversion to arsenic. But seriously, is it not amazing that the Jesuits can still exist, when their last crime [1] was sufficient to have drawn down vengeance on them, if they had not been proscribed before?

We have no news of ordinary calibre; but perhaps I grow too old to learn the lesser anecdotes of the town. I scarce ever go to public places, and live only with people who have turned the corner of adventures. Indeed in this country, there is something so singular and so new in most characters, that all the world hears the history of the most remarkable performers. The winter is young yet. I dare to say it will not long be barren.

[1] Of poisoning Pope Ganganelli.—WALPOLE.

27th.

The Duke of Gloucester, I hope, is out of danger; I mean for the present. It is a constitution that will always give alarms; it has radical evils, and yet amazing stamina. As to the physicians, I do not mind a syllable they say. On Saturday they were very proud of a discovery—they had now found out his distemper, and it was a new one; he had two shivering fits, and so there was matter forming. This mighty discovery, which only authenticated their former ignorance, proves to be a new blunder. On Tuesday they gave the Duchess no hopes at all, and on Wednesday night they recollected that his Royal Highness had had no mortal symptom—for they have no shivering fit of shame. They now talk of his going abroad in April; I wish it much sooner. In short I am very impatient, both for his health, and other reasons. He will take the Duchess and his daughters, and go no farther than the South of France. That is an answer to a question[1] you have not asked. His mind will be more at peace, and he will be free from all who would disturb it for their own ends. The Luttrels are every day, I believe, writing impertinent paragraphs in the newspapers, as if in behalf of the Duke of Gloucester, which only tends to incense the King against him, that they may involve him in their own views; but he knows it, and will not be their dupe. Adieu!

P.S. I forgot to tell you that the town of Birmingham has petitioned the Parliament to enforce the American Acts, that is, make war; for they have a manufacture of swords and muskets. I believe the Dutch will petition too, for much such a reason!

1488. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Saturday evening.

Oh, the pretty easy affectionate verses! but I beg your pardon for not returning them last night: I had not time, for I had dined out, and did not receive them till the post was gone. But the great event—well, it must stay,—I cannot drop Lord Ossory so. Madam, madam, if your heart did not cry its eyes out, it is rock and flint, and all the hard things ladies' hearts used to be made of. Mine, that has hardly any eyes or ears left, was charmed with the harmony

[1] Whether he will go to Italy.—Walpole.

and touched with the sensibility. I forgive the dairy next door to the hospital, and don't wonder that

> With such a companion to tend a few sheep,
> To rise up and play, and to lie down and sleep,

you have no taste for anything but milking cows. The ten last lines have more feeling and sentiment than ever were written by lovers, and are a better sermon in behalf of marriage than all that has been preached from St. Paul to St. Whitfield. I have not kept a copy, because I never break my trust, but I do ask them seriously, only desiring the first line, which has a foot too much, may be shortened, and they will be perfect, which they ought to be, when they are so near it.

Alas! the great event was addled, or came to little. I had been told that Lord Chatham was commissioned by Dr. Franklin to offer the King 350,000*l.* a-year from America, if the offensive bills were repealed. The Ministers thought he was to ask for an increase of force, so their intelligence was at last no better than mine! But, indeed, who could guess what he would do? He did appear, and did move to address for a recall of the troops from Boston, a very Pindaric transition from the first step towards a pacification to the last! In heroic poems it is a rule to begin in the middle, and great poets and great orators are very like in more instances than one. He was very hostile, and so was Lord Camden; but the generals being braver than the troops, some of the latter ran away, as Colonel Coventry and Cornet Grosvenor. The numbers were 68 to 18. The Duke of Cumberland, who would have joined his regiment if it had been raised, to the vanquished, was among the slain; but in truth the subject is a little too serious for joking. The war on America is determined on. Four regiments more are ordered thither, and every hostile measure is to be pursued. The wise measures of last year have already begotten a civil war. What that will beget,

> The child that is unborn will rue!

If Lord Chatham said true yesterday, the Ministers are already checkmated and have not a move to make.

Pray, Madam, remember I tell you stories about the Children in the Wood and Lord Hardwicke, and Barry, and Princess Amelie and twenty others which I have not time for now, for I have more business of one body's or other, than Lord North, and do rather more.

I will only say now that I am *becoptied* at last, enlisted in Mrs. Weesey's academy, and am to go thither to-morrow se'nnight to hear a Mr Tig-he repeat parts of Mr. Jephson's tragedy, which I am persuaded is very good, and so good that I wish I could hear it all at once; but one might as well sit down to read Bysshe's 'Art of Poetry,' as hear scraps of a plot one does not know. But I must obey; good night, Arria and Pætus without a Nero!

1489. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Feb. 1, 1775.

We are out of pain at present, Madam, about our Royal Highness. He has been out to take the air; and if I had any influence, should try that in France immediately; but he says he should only pass the remaining part of the winter in bad inns, and thinks of not setting out till April.

I know nothing of news: Lord Chatham is at this moment preparing some in the House of Lords, which will furnish the end of the letter. Last night I was at a ball at the Lady's Club. It was all goddesses, instead of being a resurrection of dancing matrons as usual. The Duchess of Devonshire effaces all without being a beauty; but her youth, figure, flowing good nature, sense, and lively modesty, and modest familiarity make her a phenomenon. Don't wonder I was at a ball; I have discovered that I am a year younger than I thought, yet I shall not use this year yet, but come out with it a dozen years hence.

Mr. Jephson's tragedy, which I concluded would not answer all that I had heard of it, exceeded my expectations infinitely. The language is noble,—the poetry, similies and metaphors, enchanting. The harmony, the modulation of the lines, shows he has the best ear in the world. I remember nothing at all equal to it appearing in my time, though I am Methusalem in my memory of the stage. I don't know whether it will have all the effect there it deserves, as the story is so well known, and the happy event of it known too, which prevents *attendrissement*. Besides, the subject in reality demands but two acts, for the conspiracy and the revolution; but one can never be tired of the poetry that protracts it. Would you believe I am to appear on the theatre along with it? My Irish friends, the Binghams, have overpersuaded me to write an epilogue, which was wanting. They gave me the subject, which I have executed miserably; but at

least I do not make the new Queen of Portugal lay aside her majesty, and sell *double entendres* like Lady Bridget Tollemache.

I was still more surprised to find my name in print the other day: Mr. Barry, the mad Irish painter, has written a book, and not a mad or insensible one. After talking of the great masters, he says, "As to the Dutch school, I leave it to the deep researches of the Hon. H. W. [at length] or any other such learned gentleman, if such another can be found." Methinks this is a little hard, Madam, seeing I have been always blamed for undervaluing the Dutch masters; but I suppose Mr. Barry has seen me laugh at some of his extravagancies in the expositions, without my knowing him.[1] However, I shall say nothing of that, or anything more to hurt him, if ever I defend myself from Dutchism, as perhaps I may. This, I remember, was one of the stories I promised you—I forget the rest; but your Ladyship will remind me when we meet over a syllabub under the cow.

2nd.

Yesterday's mountain miscarried with more *éclat* than last time. Lord Chatham offered a bill for pacifying America by abrogating the Declaratory Law and the late Acts; and, they say, recalled the memory of his ancient lustre. Lord Gower reminding him of something he had said in the other House the Lord knows when, received a thundering denial, as the gods call it; but men, a flat lie. Lord Temple lamented the production of so mischievous a bill, which yet he would vote to admit out of respect; but what signifies repeating the faint efforts of an old watergall opposed to its own old sun! The Duke of Grafton complained of a bill so hurried in. Lord Chatham replied, His Grace was at least as unfairly eager to hurry it out. That Duke acquainted the assembly that he differs with everybody, and has a plan of his own to offer. Lord Shelburne was violent, and Lord Mansfield so violently frightened, that he was not there; on

[1] Compare 'Walpoliana,' vol. ii. p. 92. In his 'Royal Academy Catalogue' for 1772 Walpole wrote the following remarks on Barry's pictures:—"12. 'Venus rising from the Sea.' Extravagant, with some genius. 13. 'Medea making her incantation after the murder of her children,'" as wild and ill-drawn. "A young Irishman, sent by Mr. Edmund Burke to study at Rome. Mr. H. W. happened to laugh at this picture at the Exhibition, when Barry, whom he did not know, was present. Barry resented this so much, that not long, in a treatise he wrote on painting, he satirised Mr. W. as an admirer of the Flemish Painters. Yet Mr. W. had been censured by others for undervaluing them too much in his 'Preface' to the 'Ædes Walpolianæ.' Barry was of a quarrelsome temper, broke with his patron Mr. Burke, and with the Royal Academy, and after some time ceased exhibiting. It is true, however, that he had genius and learning."—CUNNINGHAM.

which I hear King George joked before all his servants, when he was told it after the play. The newspapers, which now are very accurate in recounting debates, will tell your Ladyship the rest very faithfully to-morrow. When the last Prime Minister designs to open his plan I do not know; the present produces his to-day. There is a great deal of bravery and a great deal of terror stirring; and the address of to-day, I am told, has a layer of each. You must prepare, Madam, to talk America; there is no other topic to be heard, and in truth it grows a very grave one. You must lay aside your botany from the hyssop to the cedar of Libanus, and study imports and exports, and charters and geography, and religion and government, and such light reading: you will have occasion for it all. In a little time the whole country will be so much in earnest, that the dispute will probably lie in a less compass; people discuss at first, but are only angry and personal at last: and to be sure that is more amusing.

I hope this is the last letter I shall send you before you land at Hyde-Park turnpike. You will have a very good neighbourhood there; Lord and Lady Apsley are mighty agreeable people.

1490. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 15, 1775.

You have been made easy long ago, I hope, about my gout, and have restored your good opinion to the bootikins, which reduced it to so short a fit. *They could* not give you an inflammation and swelling; they probably prevented its being worse. It is still more idle when people say they weaken—who was ever *not* weak after the gout? I, who am *naturally* weaker than anybody, recover my feet so much that I can stamp on marble with all my force, which I never saw a gouty person besides able to do. Be assured that the physicians have set about that nonsensical notion of weakening, only because the bootikins do the contrary. I complained of weakness on my breast, of which I complained thirty years before I ever felt the gout, and the apothecary shook his head, like a knave as he was, and said, he had feared they would have that effect. He had never thought so, and if he had, ought to have warned me; but I believe no limb of the faculty ever laid in ambush to intercept and cut off an illness to come. If you still feel weakness, you must not wonder; the bootikins cannot make us young again. I totter as I go down

stairs—but I trust I shall never totter so much as to believe in any faculty. Fools and knaves hoodwink common sense, and if it were not like insects, of which no species can be exterminated, it would not exist upon earth.

The war with our colonies, which is now declared, is a proof how much influence jargon has on human actions. A war on our own trade is *popular!* Both Houses are as eager for it as they were for conquering the Indies—which acquits them a little of rapine, when they are as glad of what will impoverish them as of what they fancied was to enrich them—so like are the great vulgar, and the small. Are not you foreigners amazed? We are raising soldiers and seamen—so are the Americans; and, unluckily, can find a troop as easily as we a trooper. But we are above descending to calculation: one would think the whole legislature were of the club at Almack's, and imagined, like Charles Fox, that our fame was to rise in proportion to our losses. It is more extraordinary that Charles does not adopt their system, as they have copied his, but opposes them, and proposes to make his fortune when they are bankrupt. In the mean time bad news pours in from America. I do not believe all I hear—but fear I shall believe a great deal in spite of my teeth.

Another of your diplomatic brethren is become your brother in the Bath—Gordon, of Brussels. He is a fool for a comedy. We have no other news, nor think of anything that is not beyond the Atlantic. You are strangely old-fashioned to trouble your head about the Conclave; we care as much about the Caliphs of Bagdad.

I misinformed you when I said that the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester had no thoughts of Italy; they propose passing next winter at Rome, but will not stop anywhere else. I say, this is their scheme, and wish it may be executed;—but am far from having any sanguine hopes about his Royal Highness. He does not mend; his cough is very bad, and I think he falls away. He will not leave England till April, because he will inoculate his children before he carries them abroad. I tremble at the delay, and have said all I dare to the Duchess against it, as I am impatient to have him set out, and think no time should be lost.

1491. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 18, 1775.

'BRAGANZA'[1] was acted last night with prodigious success. The audience, the most impartial I ever saw, sat mute for two acts, and seemed determined to judge for themselves, and not be the dupes of the encomiums that had been so lavishly trumpeted. At the third act, they grew pleased, and interested: at the fourth they were cooled and deadened by two unnecessary scenes, but at the catastrophe in the fifth, they were transported. They clapped, shouted, huzzaed, cried bravo, and thundered out applause both at the end, and when given out again; yet the action was not worthy of the poet. Mrs. Yates shone in the dignified scenes, but had not variety enough; Smith, recalling Garrick in Richard III., played the Viceroy with great spirit; but Reddish was pitiful and whining in the Duke; Aikin ridiculous in the first old conspirator, and the Friar totally insignificant, though engaged in the principal scene in the play, where indeed he has too little to say. The charming beauties of the poetry were not yet discovered, and the faults in the conduct may be easily mended. In short, I trust, if this tragedy does not inspire better writers, that it will at least preserve the town from hearing with patience the stuff we have had for these fifty years. There was an excellent prologue written by Murphy. For my poor epilogue, though well delivered by Mrs. Yates, it appeared to me the flattest thing I ever heard, and the audience were very good in not groaning at it. I wish it could be spoken no more. The boxes are all taken for five-and-twenty nights, which are more than it can be acted this season.

I went to the rehearsal with all the eagerness of eighteen, and was delighted to feel myself so young again. The actors diverted me with their dissatisfactions and complaints, and though I said all I could, committed some of what they call proprieties, that were very improper, as seating the Duke and Duchess on a high throne, in the second act, which made the spectators conclude that the revolution, as I knew they would, had happened. The scenes and dresses were well imagined, and the stage handsomely crowded. All this was wanted, for, from the defect in the subject, which calls for but two acts, several scenes languished. A little more knowledge of the stage

[1] 'Braganza,' a Tragedy, by Robert Jephson. Walpole wrote the Epilogue. See note to Letter to Jephson, 13th July, 1777.—CUNNINGHAM.

in the author may prevent this in his future plays. For his poetry, it is beautiful to the highest degree. He has another fault, which is a want of quick dialogue; there is scarce ever a short speech, so that it will please more on reading, than in representation. I will send it to you the moment it is published.

There is nothing else new, nor do I hear of anything coming. The war with America goes on briskly, that is as far as voting goes. A great majority in both Houses is as brave as a mob ducking a pickpocket. They flatter themselves they shall terrify the Colonies into submission in three months, and are amazed to hear that there is no such probability. They might as well have excommunicated them, and left it to the devil to put the sentence into execution.

Good night, and write to me. You are an idle creature, and I am very jealous of your harpisco-violin—it is your interleaved Linnæus.[1]

1492. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Feb. 28, 1775.

Thou recreant clerk; I do not mean for not replying to my last missive, but for changing thy mind, thou unhallowed Relapse, which I did not know when I wrote to thee last, or I would not have cockered thee up with a promise of 'Braganza;' yet to show thee that I keep faith even with heretics, thou shalt have it when thou sayest how it may be sent. Thy sin is too foul to name, but thy conscience tells thee what I mean. 'Tis an Omission worse than any of the tribe of *Com;* and though posterity will be so selfish as to forgive it, there is not a Christian in being that ever can; oh yes, there are some that could, though I trust they cannot. I suppose you will be glad to hear that I have got a codicil to my last gout? I had an inflammation in my face, and yesterday was blooded for it. It sunk in two hours, but baited and gave me a sore throat; this morning I walked lame, and cannot walk without a stick; so the whole is gouty, for that devil can act any distemper, like a fine lady. It has hindered my going to Strawberry, whither the fine weather invited me. I wish we ever had such in summer.

The gates of Janus's temple are open and shut every other day;

[1] "Mr. Gray often vexed me by finding him making notes on an interleaved Linnæus, instead of practising on his lyre." *Walpole to Lady Ossory, September* 8. 1791.—Cunningham.

the porter has a sad time of it, and deserves a reversion for three lives. We are sending the Americans a sprig of olive, lapped up in an Act for a famine next year; for we are as merciful as we are stout. However, as the two Houses do not much reckon upon bonfires to come, each is treating itself with one at present, and have ordered a Weekly paper and a Pamphlet, each called 'The Crisis,' to be burnt by the common hangman; and as contradictions now go hand in hand, each party has its victim. I have seen neither of the sacrifices—both they say are very stupid; the first is too free with his Majesty; the second compliments him with the sole right of Taxation. Methinks all parliaments have a mortal aversion to the word *crisis*.

Since you left town I have made another considerable purchase, for which I have been long haggling, the rest of the Digby miniatures. They had been divided into two shares. There is one superb piece of Sir Kenelm, his wife, and two sons, by Peter Oliver, after Vandyck, in the highest preservation, and certainly the capital miniature of the world. I am not quite sure whether you did not see them two years ago; but why do I tell you anything? you are twiddling your instrument of the composite order, and care no more than Orpheus whether anybody but beasts listens to you. You now owe me two letters, and paid I will be, or I am

Your most obedient
humble servant.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, March 3, 1775.

Thirty years ago, when I was turned twenty, I used to leave Cambridge for London whenever I had five guineas to spare, on what they called a scheme. My scheme was to dine every day at a chop-house behind St. Clement's [in the Strand] at two, in order to be in the middle of the pit at four, there to remain with all the impatience of expectation till the curtain drew up; and this I continued to do daily while my money lasted, and with as much regularity as I at present go morning and afternoon to see the ancient maiden gentlewomen and decayed tradesmen of this famous city of York mumble their matins and their vespers. Now, Sir, if your former letter had been written thirty years before its present date, there is no question but I should have had both talents and spirit to answer it. The reading, it is true, put me, like Hezekiah's sundial, several degrees backward, and I felt myself adolescent. But the effect was, as I say, but momentary. The Minster bell tinkled me to prayers, and the effect vanished. However, when you send me the Tragedy itself, perhaps I shall be able to fill a page with closet criticism, for that power has not quite left me, and I distinguish it from theatrical criticism widely. Expect then to hear whether your favourite poet has observed his unities so well as a certain person who wrote 'The Mysterious Mother,' and despised himself for having observed them; whether the Duchess of the one has as much of the *sibi constet* as the Countess of the other, and which has the best hand at preserving the costume when he delineates a friar. In the mean time I quit your former letter like the first head of one of my sermons, and

1493. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 7, 1775.

If your contempt for your contemporaries extended to total silence, perhaps I should not disagree with you. There is dignity in indignation that refuses wholesome food to a stupid age, that is content with carrion. But why then publish 'Gray's Life?' Keep it back till you like to publish it with the original notes. Leave the Johnsons and Macphersons to worry one another for the diversion of a rabble, that desires and deserves no better sport.

proceed secondly to that which I received this morning. It begins "Thou recreant clerk! thou unhallowed relapse! thou heretic!" and it begins well. I take away every one of the titles to myself, and bow beneath the scourge. There may come a time, however, when I may wash my Ethiopianism white, but that time I never wish to live to see, because if I do, I must survive the majority of my friends. In the meanwhile here I sit, with my pen in my hand, muzzled like a mastiff, wishing to bite, and yet unable even to bark. Convinced of this melancholy truth, that no situation, however independent, no desires or ambition, however moderated, nay even (as I can truly say) annihilated, will authorise a man in these days to do what he thinks right; unless he is as callous as a prime minister, and as unfeeling as his master. You, though you are the son of a prime minister, have not this callousness about you, and therefore from you I not only expect, but demand, forgiveness.

As to the two 'Crisis's' you mention, I can only say I envy their fate: to be burnt by the common hangman is a thing devoutly to be wished. No fate except that of the pillory exceeds it. I would be content with even an unpensioned pillory, and yet this, stern fate denies me. However, that you may run no risk of either from receiving this letter, I shall prudently put it under a Secretary of State's cover.

I congratulate you on your new Miniatures, though I know one day they will become Court property, and dangle under the crimson-coloured shop-glasses of our gracious Queen Charlotte. I never saw the piece you mentioned, though I burn to see it.

I condole with you on your gout, though I would almost bear its pain for you, if I could also possess your spirits. I hope it will be but a short fit, yet might not a little care of cold afterwards—I say no more, for I know it is in vain, and yet an under-waistcoat—don't throw my letter in the fire till it has told you how much and how sincerely

I am yours,
W. Mason.

Pray don't flirt at my musical instrument, it and fidget are my only comforts at present. Tell Lord Nuneham that I have finished the translation of Rousseau's 'Pygmalion,' which he set me about three years ago, purely to keep myself innocently employed, and out of harm's way. He shall have it for writing for; you I know will despise it. No matter: could an actor be found to act it, (but for this the soul of Pritchard,[1] the voice of Mrs. Cibber, and the eye of Garrick must all unite in the form of a male figure, as young and beautiful as Mrs. Hartley) I say it would "pit, box, and gallery" with 'Braganza.'

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[1] Compare what Mrs. Siddons says of Mason in Campbell's 'Life of Mrs. Siddons.'—Cunningham.

Here is 'Braganza:' I do not say that either the subject or conduct are interesting. The language is good, the poetry charming. Read any tragedy written within these thirty years, and then wonder that I was delighted to see even a cousin of Melpomene.

If you have *translated* 'Pygmalion,' I shall be very glad to see him too. If you have only translated the music, I shall not be much the wiser, yet do not think my ignorance makes me supercilious. I admire all your talents, though not a judge of all. Your writings—your composite-instrument, your drawings are dear to me according to my degrees of capacity; and when I seize every opportunity of drawing you into a correspondence, does not it say that I love your letters, and do my utmost to cultivate your friendship? Yes, I do; let all the prime ministers since my father, whom you name, say as much if they can! To my great sorrow we live at a distance, and when I wish to see you most, I have seen you least; yet Strawberry, where you scarce ever was in summer, is pleasant then. If you would at any time give me a week, I should think it no trouble to fetch you. Time grows precious to me, and, therefore, I would employ it in the way most agreeable to me. Don't think me importunate, but it shall not be my own fault if I do not please myself.

Yours most sincerely,

H. W.

1494. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, March 20, 1775.

I HAVE not written to you this month, I know: no symptom of negligence, but from want of matter. You will say, perhaps, "but there have been many long days in Parliament:" very true; but long days make small sensation, when the majorities are very great, and always on the same side. The Houses go on fulminating against America; we shall see whether their edicts are regarded, or rather their troops and generals. The province of New York seems to be better disposed than the other Colonies; but we must wait for the re-echo of our new acts, and for the Congress in May. In three months we shall hear whether it will be war or peace. The nation will stare a little if it is the former. It is little expected, and less thought of. We are given up to profusion, extravagance, and pleasure: heroism is not at all in fashion. Cincinnatus will be found at the hazard-table, and Camillus at a ball. The vivacity of the young

Queen of France has reached hither. Our young ladies are covered with more plumes than any nation that has no other covering. The first people of fashion are going to act plays, in which comedians, singers, dancers, figurantes, might all walk at a coronation. The summer is to open with a masquerade on the Thames. I am glad the American enthusiasts are so far off; I don't think we should be a match for them. We want more Indies; we cannot afford to lose any.

So you have chosen a Pope! Which will he fear most, France and Spain, or poison?

The Duke of Gloucester has lost his second daughter; both were inoculated, that he might carry them abroad. The youngest was very unhealthy, and died the next day after the disorder appeared; the other, on whom he dotes, will do well. He is far from being so himself; coughs, and falls away. I hope a better climate will save him.

I am wishing for summer; not to go on the water in mask, but to escape from this scene of diversions. I mix in them as little as I can; they suit neither my age nor inclination. For some years I have loved the month of June, when I and all the town, for we all live together, I think, are to part.

I just now hear that Lord Bristol[1] is dead at the Bath. He was born to the gout from his mother's family, but starved himself to keep it off. This brought on paralytic strokes, which have despatched him. Will her Grace of Kingston now pass eldest, and condescend to be, as she really is, Countess of Bristol? or will she come over and take her trial for the becoming dignity of the exhibition in Westminster Hall? How it would sound, "Elizabeth, Countess of Bristol, alias Duchess of Kingston, come into Court!" I can tell you nothing more extraordinary, nor would any history figure near hers. It shows genius to strike out anything so new as her achievements. Though we have many uncommon personages, it is not easy for them to be superiorly particular. Adieu!

[1] George William Hervey, second Earl of Bristol.—WALPOLE.

1495. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, April 3, 1775.

Well! your book ['Memoirs of Gray'] is walking the town in midday. How it is liked, I do not yet know. Were I to judge from my own feelings, I should say there never was so entertaining or interesting a work: that it is the most perfect model of biography; and must make Tacitus, and Agricola too, detest you. But as the world and simple I are not often of the same opinion, it will perhaps be thought very dull. If it is, all we can do is to appeal to that undutiful urchin, Posterity, who commonly treats the judgment of its parents with contempt, though it has so profound a veneration for its most distant ancestors. As you have neither imitated the teeth-breaking diction of Johnson, nor coined slanders against the most virtuous names in story, like modern historians [Dalrymple and Macpherson], you cannot expect to please the *reigning* taste. Few persons have had time, from their politics, diversions, and gaming, to have read much of so large a volume, which they will keep for the summer, when they have full as much of nothing to do. Such as love poetry, or think themselves poets, will have hurried to the verses and been disappointed at not finding half a dozen more 'Elegies in a Churchyard.' A few fine gentlemen will have read one or two of the shortest letters, which not being exactly such as they write themselves, they will dislike or copy next post; they who wish or intend to find fault with Gray, you, or even me, have, to be sure, skimmed over the whole, except the Latin for even spite, *non est tanti*—. The Reviewers, no doubt, are already writing against you; not because they have read the whole, but because one's own name is always the first thing that strikes one in a book. The Scotch will be more deliberate, but not less angry; and if not less angry, not more merciful. Every Hume, however spelt, will I don't know what do; I should be sorry to be able to guess what. I have already been asked, why I did not prevent publication of the censure on David? The truth is (as you know) I never saw the whole together till now, and not that part; and if I had, why ought I to have prevented it? Voltaire will cast an *imbelle* javelin *sine ictu* at Gray, for he loves to depreciate a *dead* great author, even when unprovoked,—even when he has commended him alive, or before he was so vain and so envious as he is now. The Rousseaurians will imagine that

I interpolated the condemnation of his Eloise. In short, we shall have many sins laid to our charge, of which we are innocent; but what can the malicious say against the innocent but what is not true?

I am here in brunt to the storm; you sit serenely aloof and smile at its sputtering. So should I too, were I out of sight, but I hate to be stared at, and the object of whispers before my face. The Maccaronis will laugh out, for you say I am still in the fashionable world.—What! they will cry, as they read while their hair is curling,—that old soul; for old and old-fashioned are synonymous in the vocabulary of mode, alas! Nobody is so sorry as I to be in the world's fashionable purlieus; still, in truth, all this is a joke and touches me little. I seem to myself a Strulbrug, who have lived past my time, and see almost my own life written before my face while I am yet upon earth, and as it were the only one of my contemporaries with whom I began the world. Well; in a month's time there will be little question of Gray, and less of me. America and feathers and masquerades will drive us into libraries, and there I am well content to live as an humble companion to Gray and you; and, thank my stars, not on the same shelf with the Macphersons and Dalrymples.

One omission I have found, at which I wonder; you do not mention Gray's study of physic, of which he had read much, and I doubt to his hurt. I had not seen till now that delightful encomium on Cambridge, when empty of its inhabitants. It is as good as anything in the book, and has that true humour, which I think equal to any of his excellencies. So has the apostrophe to Nicholls, "why, you monster, I shall never be dirty and amused as long as I live," but I will not quote any more, though I shall be reading it and reading it for the rest of my life.

But come, here is a task you must perform, and forthwith, and if you will not write to me, you shall *transcribble* to me, or I will *combustle* you. Send me incontinently all the proper names that are omitted. You know how I love writing marginal notes in my books, and there is not a word in or out of the book of which I will be ignorant. To save you trouble, here is a list of who is's. Page 152, fill up the asterisks; do. p. 174, do. 206, do. 232, 249, Peer who is it; 250? do.; the Lady of Quality? 251; the leader, 275; who the asterisk, 282? the Dr. who, 283? do. 284; the B.'s and E.'s 288, where, whose is Stratton? 290, Lord?

You see my queries are not very numerous. If you do not answer them I will not tell you a syllable of what the *fashionable* say of your

book, and I do not believe you have another correspondent amongst them. At present they are labouring through a very short work, more peculiarly addressed to them, at least to a respectable part of them, the Jockey-Club, who, to the latter's extreme surprise, have been consulted on a point of honour by Mr. Fitzgerald, which, however, he has already decided himself with as little conscience as they could do in their most punctilious moments.

If you will satisfy me, I will tell you the following *bon-mot* of Foote, but be sure you don't read what follows till you have obeyed my commands. Foote was at Paris in October, when *Dr. Murray* was, who *admiring* or *dreading* his wit (for commentators dispute on the true reading) often invited him to dinner with his nephew. The ambassador produced a very small bottle of Tokay, and dispensed it in very small glasses. The uncle, to prove how precious every drop, said it was of the most exquisite growth, and very old. Foote, taking up the diminutive glass, and examining it, replied, "It is very little of its age." Return me my story if you don't perform the conditions. I wish I could send you anybody's else life to write!

1496. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, April 11, 1775.

I THANK you, dear Sir, for your kind letter, and the good account you give of yourself—nor can I blame your change from writing—that is, transcribing, to reading—sure you ought to divert yourself rather than others—though I should not say so, if your pen had not confined itself to transcripts.

I am perfectly well, and heed not the weather; though I wish the seasons came a little oftener into their own places instead of each other's. From November, till a fortnight ago, we had warmth that I should often be glad of in summer—and since we are not sure of it then, was rejoiced when I could get it. For myself, I am a kind of delicate Hercules; and though made of paper, have, by temperance, by using as much cold water inwardly and outwardly as I can, and by taking no precautions against catching cold, and braving all weathers, become capable of suffering by none. My biennial visitant, the gout, has yielded to the bootikins, and stayed with me this last time but five weeks in lieu of five months. Stronger men perhaps would kill themselves by my practice, but it has done so long with me, I shall trust to it.

I intended writing to you on 'Gray's Life,'[1] if you had not prevented me. I am charmed with it, and prefer it to all the biography I ever saw. The style is excellent, simple, unaffected; the method admirable, artful, and judicious.[2] He has *framed* the fragments (as a person said) so well, that they are fine drawings, if not finished pictures. For my part, I am so interested in it, that I shall certainly read it over and over. I do not find that it is likely to be the case with many *yet*. Never was a book, which people pretended to expect so much with impatience, less devoured—at least in London, where quartos are not of quick digestion. Faults are found, I hear, at Eton with the Latin Poems for false quantities —no matter—they are equal to the English—and can one say more?

At Cambridge, I should think the book would both offend much and please; at least if they are as sensible to humour as to ill-humour; and there is orthodoxy enough to wash down a camel. The Scotch and the Reviewers will be still more angry, and the latter have not a syllable to pacify them. So they who wait for their decisions will probably miss of reading the most entertaining book in the world—a punishment which they who trust to such wretched judges deserve; for who are more contemptible than such judges, but they who pin their faith on them?

In answer to you, yourself, my good Sir, I shall not subscribe to your censure of Mr. Mason, whom I love and admire, and who has shown the greatest taste possible in the execution of this work. Surely he has *said* enough in gratitude, and *done* far beyond what gratitude could demand. It seems delicacy in expatiating on the legacy; particularising more gratitude would have lessened the evidence of friendship, and made the justice done to Gray's character look more like a debt. He speaks of him in slender circumstances, not as distressed: and so he was till after the deaths of his parents and aunts; and even then surely not rich. I think he does somewhere say that he meant to be buried with his mother, and not specifying any

[1] By Mason. At the end of Mason's work Mr. Cole wrote the following memorandum:—"I am by no means satisfied with this 'Life;' it has too much the affectation of classical shortness to please me. More circumstances would have suited my taste better; besides, I think the biographer had a mind to revenge himself of the sneerings Mr. Gray put upon him, though he left him, I guess, above a thousand pounds, which is slightly hinted at only; yet Mr. Walpole was quite satisfied with the work when I made my objection."—WRIGHT.

[2] The *method* was followed by Boswell in his 'Life of Johnson,' by Moore in his 'Life of Byron,' and by Lockhart in his 'Life of Scott.'—CUNNINGHAM.

other place confirms it. In short, Mr. Mason shall never know your criticisms; he has a good heart, and would feel them, though certainly not apprised that he would merit them. A man who has so called out all his friend's virtues, could not want them himself.

I shall be much obliged to you for the prints you destine for me. The Earl of Cumberland I have, and will not rob you of. I wish you had been as successful with Mr. G. as with Mr. T. I mean, if you are not yet paid—now is the time, for he has sold his house to the Duke of Marlborough—I suppose he will not keep his prints long: he changes his pursuits continually and extravagantly—and then sells to indulge new fancies.

I have had a piece of luck within these two days. I have long lamented our having no certain piece written by Anne Boleyn's brother, Lord Rochford. I have found a very pretty copy of verses by him in the new published volume of the 'Nugæ Antiquæ,' though by mistake he is called Earl of, instead of Viscount, Rochford. They are taken from a MS. dated twenty-eight years after the author's death, and are much in the manner of Lord Surrey's and Sir T. Wyat's poems. I should at first have doubted if they were not counterfeited, on reading my 'Noble Authors;' but then the blunder of *earl* for *viscount* would hardly have been committed. A little modernised and softened in the cadence, they would be very pretty.

I have got the rest of the Digby pictures, but at a very high rate. There is one very large of Sir Kenelm, his wife, and two sons, in exquisite preservation, though the heads of him and his wife are not so highly finished as those I have—yet the boys and draperies are so amazing that, together with the size, it is certainly the most capital miniature in the world: there are a few more, very fine too. I shall be happy to show them to you, whenever you Burnhamize—I mean before August, when I propose making my dear old blind friend a visit at Paris—nothing else would carry me thither. I am too old to seek diversions, and too indolent to remove to a distance by choice, though not so immovable as you to much less distance. Adieu! pray tell me what you hear is said of 'Gray's Life' at Cambridge.

1497. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, April 14, 1775.

WHAT is the perfection of ingratitude? silence. What is the perfection of gratitude? silence. Obedience is better than sacrifice, but obedience may be sacrifice too: judge.

We are both a little disappointed, are not we? How could we imagine that a quarto, that contained nothing but wit, humour, sentiment, truth, morality, reflection, genuine and original poetry, and the memoirs of two Poets, of which one was a youth without guile or gall, and the other a good man through life, should interest the present age? especially when such ingredients were arranged with exquisite taste and judgment, and compose the most pleasing work, the standard of biography? No, my good friend, unless folks spare their praises because it would charm me to hear them, I have been forced to ask what is thought of 'Gray's Life.' Indeed nobody, without my avidity, could read it at once, and as it has been published a fortnight, it was impossible it could keep its station amidst the torrent of unlively follies that overflow each day. Well, the best books were certainly never calculated for the plurality of readers; or, which is wondrous rare, some very good judge must be the dictator of the age. Still it is a comfort that works of genius are indestructible. They can neither be overlaid by the dulness of contemporaries, nor escape the penetration of subsequent taste in all centuries, who, like the adepts in chemistry, transmit the secret to the brotherhood, and preserve the nostrum of the elixir for those who are worthy of it.

For me, though I recur once or twice a day to *the volume*, I have had time to read other things too, as a journey to Spain and Portugal, by a Mr. Twiss, who tells one nothing in vulgar aims at wit but what Baretti and others have told, that those kingdoms contain nothing but muleteers and bad inns, and are as dull and depopulated as countries must be, where the inquisition has reigned so long, and despotism reigns still. I have waded through Mr. Tyrrwhit's most tedious notes to the 'Canterbury Tales,' for a true antiquary can still be zealous to settle the genuine shape of a lump of mineral from which Dryden extracted all the gold, and converted into beautiful medals. I was paid for my trouble by lighting on this couplet so applicable to her Grace of Kingston,—

I graunt it well, I have of non envie,
Who maidenhed preferre to bigamie.

I have dipped into the second volume of 'Nugæ Antiquæ,' and was lucky there too, finding a madrigal, not at all despicable, by the Viscount Rochford (Anne Boleyn's brother), of whom I had never been able to discover a single distich. For Macpherson, I stopped dead short in the first volume; never was such a heap of insignificant trash and lies. One instance shall suffice: in a letter from a spy to James II. there is a blank for a name: a note without the smallest ground to build the conjecture on, says, "probably the Earl of Devonshire," pretty well! yet not content, the honest gentleman says in the index, "The Earl of Devonshire is suspected of favouring the excluded family." Can you suspect such a worthy person of forgery? could he forge Ossian?

I forgot in excuse for the town, to tell you that it is very busy about a history of two Perreau's and a Mrs. Rudd, who are likely to be hanged for misapplying their ingenuity. They drew bills, instead of rising from the pillory to pensions, by coining anecdotes against the author and friends of the Revolution. As Mrs. Rudd has turned evidence, I suppose as soon as her husband is executed, she will have eight hundred a year to educate her children.

To return to Ossian: is not it evident that the Scots are of Irish parentage? Hurt at the charge of having never produced a *poet*, they forge an Epic in *prose*.

Thank you for answering my queries. I have one more: who was the person Gray suspected of writing Colman's and Lloyd's satire?[1] I imagine, the person mentioned in the next page. Mr. Chute says, Posterity will not believe that such a book as yours could be written in this age, which has so totally lost sight of taste and common sense. Pray, did you write it now, or when *some how or other* (as woman and the French say) you lived in the Augustan age?

Since I wrote this, I have gone further into the 'Nugæ Antiquæ,' and have found three invaluable letters with admirable pictures of the Courts of that time. They show clearly what a sad dog Queen Bess was, and K. James what a silly bitch. There is a *bon-mot* to the latter of Sir John Harrington's (translator of Ariosto), who had a great deal of wit. The son of David *did much presse for my opinion touchinge the power of Satane in matter of witchcraft, and*

[1] 'Odes to Obscurity and Oblivion.'—CUNNINGHAM.

askede me with much gravitie if I did truelie understande why the devil did worke more with anciente women than others. I did not refraine from a scurvey jeste, and even saide (notwithstandinge to whom it was saide) that we were taughte hereof in scripture, where it is tolde that the devil walketh in dry places. Was it possible to make a better answer to such a foolish question? Is not this worthy of being hung up as a companion to Foote's? bad as the ages we wot of, they furnish *bon-mots* at least.

Lord Nuneham has just been here, and says everybody he has heard speak of it likes your book; that does not content me; they must say as Mr. Chute and I do, that we will read it for the rest of our lives. Adieu.

Your constant reader,

H. W.

P.S. I forgot to put my letter in the post on Saturday.

1498. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, April 17, 1775.

It is more equitable to suppose that my conception is worn out, than that the world wants events. I tell you of a nation of madmen, and yet want instances. It is certain, both that we do not grow sage, and that I have nothing to say. The town is divided into two great classes, the politicians and the pleasurists. The first are occupied with that vast fœtus, the American contest; and wars at that distance do not go on expeditiously. Wilkes has arrived at his *ne plus ultra;* he has presented a remonstrance in form to the Throne; and, with the magnanimity of an Alexander, used his triumph with moderation —in modern language, with good breeding. The younger generation game, dress, dance, go to Newmarket. Some of them, not juniors all, learn to sing. Cortez was victorious in our last opera, 'Montezuma.' I doubt the Americans will not be vanquished in recitative.

The cause of M. de Guisnes is still going on. The publications would fill a whole shelf. The Duc d'Aiguillon has, in self-defence, sent forth their correspondence. I have not read it yet; he will find it difficult to appear white in my eyes.

Lady Gertrude Hotham, (Lord Chesterfield's sister,) one of the few whom perhaps you remember, is dead; she set her ruffle, and thence the rest of her dress, on fire, and died of it in ten days. She

had wit like all her brothers, but for many years had been a Methodist. About two years ago, as the Earl [of Chesterfield] was ill, she went with her Primate, Lady Huntingdon,[1] to try to tempt him to one of their seminaries in Wales, hoping to get at his soul by a cranny in his health. They extolled the prospects, and then there were such charming mountains! "Hold, ladies," said he; "I don't love mountains,—when your Ladyship's faith has removed the mountains, I will go thither with all my heart!" What pity there is nothing of that wit in his Letters!

Is it possible this is all I should have to tell you after a month's silence? 'Tis well I have made it a rule to be punctual; how natural to wait till something should happen, if I were not a prodigy of regularity! I am here alone, courting a coy spring, who sends me a cross answer by an east wind, and am forced to content myself with the old housekeeper, a fire. I have books, and prints, and playthings, and the time passes agreeably, but will not do to relate. Your letters will be particularly acceptable, when you have got your nephew—not that nephews are charming things, but I am sure you will like yours, though you must allow for a vast difference in your ideas. You have been forty years out of England, and can have but a very faint image of what it is now. You have seen nothing but raw boys and rawer governors. Your nephew has just lived long enough to be formed on the present scale; at Florence one may subsist for a century on the same way of thinking. He has drops of your and his father's blood, that is, gentle, humane feelings. Talk to his heart, not to his language. In short, think that anything you see, and do not approve, is the growth of the age, and not peculiar to him. When you discover his father, be sure it is his own. Believe me, I found him so preferable to his contemporaries, that I loved him. Adieu!

1499. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, April 22, [1775.]

This letter would have set out yesterday if I had come to town, as I intended: now it cannot depart till Tuesday; and for anything it contains, will arrive time enough. Yours of the 8th met me here, and seems to complain of my long silence. The beginning of my

[1] Lady Selina Shirley, Countess Dowager of Huntingdon.—Walpole.

letter shows I was conscious it was time to write—and yet I am not aware that I have ever exceeded the interval of a month, and am never so long without writing, if anything material happens.

I dined to-day at the Exhibition of Pictures, with the Royal Academicians. We do not beat Titian or Guido, yet. Zoffani has sent over a wretched 'Holy Family.' What is he doing? Does he return, or go to Russia, as they say? He is the Hogarth of Dutch painting, but, no more than Hogarth, can shine out of his own way. He might have drawn the 'Holy Family' well if he had seen them *in statu quo*. Sir Joshua Reynolds is a great painter, but, unfortunately, his colours seldom stand longer than crayons. We have a Swede, one Loutherbourg, who would paint landscape and cattle excellently if he did not in every picture indulge some one colour inordinately. Horse, dogs, and animals we paint admirably, and a few landscapes well. The prices of all are outrageous, and the numbers of professors still greater. We have an American, West, who deals in high history, and is vastly admired, but he is heavier than Guercino, and has still less grace, and is very inferior. We have almost a statuary or two, and very good architects; but as Vanbrugh dealt in quarries, and Kent in lumber, Adam, our most admired, is all gingerbread, filigraine, and fan-painting. Wyatt, less fashionable, has as much taste, is grander, and more pure. We have private houses that cost more than the Palace Pitti. Will you never come and see your fine country before it is undone?

1500. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, April 25, 1775.

THE least I can do, dear Sir, in gratitude for the cargo of prints I have received to-day from you, is to send you a medicine. A pair of bootikins will set out to-morrow morning in the machine that goes from the Queen's-head in Gray's-inn-lane. To be certain, you had better send for them where the machine inns, lest they should neglect delivering them at Milton. My not losing a moment shows my zeal; but if you can bear a little pain, I should not press you to use them. I have suffered so dreadfully, that I constantly wear them to diminish the stock of gout in my constitution; but as your fit is very slight, and will not last, and as you are pretty sure by its beginning so late, that you will never have much; and as the gout certainly

carries off other complaints, had not you better endure a little, when it is rather a remedy than a disease? I do not desire to be entirely delivered from the gout, for all reformations do but make room for some new grievance: and, in my opinion, a disorder that requires no physician, is preferable to any that does. However, I have put relief in your power, and you will judge for yourself. You must tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to the flesh; and, when you take them off, it should be in bed: rub your feet with a warm cloth, and put on warm stockings, for fear of catching cold while the pores are open. It would kill anybody but me, who am of adamant, to walk out in the dew in winter in my slippers in half an hour after pulling off the bootikins. A physician sent me word, good-naturedly, that there was danger of catching cold after the bootikins, unless one was careful. I thanked him, but told him my precaution was, never taking any. All the winter I pass five days in a week without walking out, and sit often by the fireside till seven in the evening. When I do go out, whatever the weather is, I go with both glasses of the coach down, and so I do at midnight out of the hottest room. I have not had a single cold, however slight, these two years.

You are too candid in submitting at once to my defence of Mr. Mason. It is true I am more charmed with his book than I almost ever was with one. I find more people like the grave letters than those of humour, and some think the latter a little affected, which is as wrong a judgment as they could make; for Gray never wrote anything easily but things of humour. Humour was his natural and original turn—and though, from his childhood, he was grave and reserved, his genius led him to see things ludicrously and satirically; and though his health and dissatisfaction gave him low spirits, his melancholy turn was much more affected than his pleasantry in writing. You knew him enough to know I am in the right—but the world in general always wants to be told how to think, as well as what to think. The print,[1] I agree with you, though like, is a very disagreeable likeness, and the worst likeness of him. It gives the primness he had when under constraint; and there is a blackness in the countenance which was like him only the last time I ever saw him, when I was much struck with it; and, though I did not apprehend him in danger, it left an impression on me that was uneasy, and

[1] The profile portrait of Gray prefixed to Mason's 'Memoirs of Gray.'—CUNNINGHAM.

almost prophetic of what I heard but too soon after leaving him. Wilson drew the picture under much such impression, and I could not bear it in my room; Mr. Mason altered it a little, but still it is not well, nor gives any idea of the determined virtues of his heart. It just serves to help the reader to an image of the person, whose genius and integrity they must admire, if they are so happy as to have a taste for either.

The 'Peep into the Gardens at Twickenham' is a silly little book, of which a few little copies were printed some years ago for presents, and which now sets up for itself as a vendible book. It is a most inaccurate, superficial, blundering account of Twickenham and other places, drawn up by a Jewess, who has married twice, and turned Christian, poetress, and authoress. She has printed her poems, too, and one complimentary copy of mine, which, in good breeding, I could not help sending her in return for violent compliments in verse to me. I do not remember that hers were good; mine I know were very bad, and certainly never intended for the press.

I bought the first volume of Manchester, but could not read it; it was much too learned for me, and seemed rather an account of Babel than Manchester, I mean in point of antiquity.[1] To be sure, it is very kind in an author to promise one the history of a country town, and give one a circumstantial account of the antediluvian world into the bargain. But I am simple and ignorant, and desire no more than I pay for. And then for my progenitors, Noah and the Saxons, I have no curiosity about them. Bishop Lyttelton used to plague me to death about barrows, and tumuli, and Roman camps, and all those bumps in the ground that do not amount to a most imperfect ichnography; but, in good truth, I am content with all arts when perfected, nor inquire how ingeniously people contrive to do without them—and I care still less for remains of art that retain no vestiges of art. Mr. Bryant,[2] who is sublime in unknown knowledge, diverted me more, yet I have not finished his work, no more than he has. There is a great ingenuity in discovering all his history [though it has never been written] by etymologies. Nay,

[1] 'The History of Manchester,' by John Whitaker, B. D. London: 1771-3-5. 2 vols. 4to. "We talked," says Boswell, "of antiquarian researches. JOHNSON—'All that is really *known* of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages. We *can* know no more than what the old writers have told us; yet what large books have we upon it; the whole of which, excepting such parts as are taken from those old writers, is all a dream, such as Whitaker's Manchester.'" *Life of Johnson*, vol. vii. p. 189.—WRIGHT.

[2] Jacob Bryant.—CUNNINGHAM.

he convinced me that the Greeks had totally mistaken all they went to learn in Egypt, &c. by doing, as the French do still, judge wrong by the ear—but as I have been trying now and then for above forty years to learn something, I have not time to unlearn it all again, though I allow this our best sort of knowledge. If I should die when I am not clear in the History of the World below its first three thousand years, I should be at a sad loss on meeting with Homer and Hesiod, or any of those *moderns* in the Elysian fields, before I knew what I ought to think of them.

Pray do not betray my ignorance: the Reviewers and such literati have called me *a learned and ingenious gentleman*. I am sorry they ever heard my name, but don't let them know how irreverently I speak of the erudite, whom I dare to say they admire. These wasps, I suppose, will be very angry at the just contempt Mr. Gray had for them, and will, as insects do, attempt to sting, in hopes that their twelvepenny readers will suck a little venom from the momentary tumour they raise—but good night—and once more, thank you for the prints. Yours ever.

1501. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 7, 1775.

Methinks I am grown an uninteresting correspondent. Yet I know not how to help it. I never could *compose* letters; they were forced to write themselves, and live upon their daily bread. I have not only done with politics, but politics have done with themselves. They depend on Opposition, as a private dispute does—and there is scarce any such thing—I mean in these islands. There is, indeed, beyond the seas an opposition, so big, that most folks call it a rebellion, which if computed by the tract of country it occupies, we, as so diminutive in comparison, ought rather to be called in rebellion to that. All the late letters thence are as hostile as possible; and, unless their heads are as cool as their hearts seem determined, it will not be long before we hear of the overt acts of war. Our three Generals are sailed, and Gage will have a pretty large army. They say he is preparing to attack the American magazine. Our stake is deep, though, like other rebellions, this does not aim at the capital; yet it is that kind of war in which even victory may ruin us. Some of your *corps diplomatique* menace us with the great armaments preparing in Spain, but the Stocks,

that are no heroes, do not seem to believe them; and I am too brave to be frightened before they are. I live a good deal here, and the Spaniards must be at Brentford before I shall make the Militia of Twickenham turn out. The map of America I have forgotten, and cannot learn it again now, but leave it to a younger generation, whose business it will be.

I have outlived very nearly all the persons that were on the stage when I came into the world. My contemporaries seem going too. I have lost three of them very lately, Lady Milton,[1] General Boscawen,[2] and the Duchess of Montagu[3]—I don't believe the latter's death has put the same thoughts into her widower's head as it has into mine: he will think of leaving a young duke, before he packs up. The Duchess has given 7000*l.* a year to her daughter the Duchess of Buccleuch, and as much to the Duke of Montagu, yet only for his life, so perhaps she was not very desirous of his having a son and heir. Another of our number is dying, the Duchess of Northumberland. Her turtle will not be so impatient for a mate, as his[4] patent does not enable him to beget Percys—a master or miss Smithson would sound like natural children.

The papers, my only informers, say your new Pope has opened the cage of the Jesuits, and let them fly. So has the King of France done for Madame du Barri. I suppose both will return to their former professions, — different kinds of intrigue. His Holiness, I suppose, was afraid of following his predecessor too soon.

The present session, say my oracles, is to end this month. So is the cause of Monsieur de Guisnes—it is time; the controversy amounts to many volumes, and exhausted my patience; I could not go through it. His adversary, I am told by those who have more phlegm, has lost all temper and discretion, abuses even his protectors, and the public, for being against him. This looks well for De Guisnes; if anything can pay him for what he has undergone!

[1] Lady Caroline Sackville, daughter of Lionel [first] Duke of Dorset, and wife of Joseph Damer, Lord Milton.—WALPOLE.

[2] Third son of Hugh, first Viscount Falmouth.—WALPOLE.

[3] Mary, second daughter of John, second Duke of Montagu.—WALPOLE.

[4] George Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan, husband of Lady Mary Montagu, one of the two co-heiresses of Duke John; and Sir Hugh Smithson, Earl of Northumberland, husband of Lady Elizabeth Seymour, sole heiress of Algernon Duke of Somerset, were to be created Dukes at the same time, but as it was from the pretensions of their wives, George III. rightly would not entail the Dukedoms on their children by other wives. The Earl of Cardigan would not accept it on that condition; the Earl of Northumberland did, and was made a Duke. Soon after Lord Cardigan got the Dukedom without that limitation, and only lost the precedence he would have had over Lord Cardigan, who was a senior Earl.—WALPOLE.

What courage any man must have that supports a controversy! It is treating your enemies with everything that can be said to your prejudice. How can one hate one enemy more than all?

As Strawberry furnishes so little, and this letter is not impatient to set out, I shall carry it to town, and keep it for more bulk. Yet I must commend myself a little first. I have finished this house and place these three years, and yet am content with and enjoy it—a very uncommon case in a country where nobody is pleased but while they are improving, and where they are tired the moment they have done. I choose my house should enjoy itself, which poor houses and gardens seldom do, for people go on mending till they die, and the next comer, who likes to improve too, begins to mend all that has been done. I knew what I wished; I have it, and am satisfied—and yet do not forget that I am one of my contemporaries! I have all my life been blessed with knowing my own mind. I never wished to be *anybody*, that is, anything; and when the moments have arrived in which I might have been what I pleased, I resisted them, and persisted in my nothinghood. I hated Parliament, resolved to quit it, and did: was told I should repent, but never have. There ends my panegyric on myself; but pray don't think it very high flown, when the sum of all is, that I am content with a small house and garden, and with being nobody.

1502. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 7, 1775.

Of all the birds in the air, I like a Freemason best, and next a Physician that gives one pills to purge melancholy. I am content to be sick, when my medicines are palatable. I remember the first words of a letter I wrote to you into Suffolk, and if you do too, repeat them if possible with exaggeration.

You are the idlest of beings, and never set pen to paper, or I am an indefatigable correspondent, and plague you with my letters. I cannot help it. Not that I have any thing to say, or any reason for not waiting to hear from you. The Reviews do not know yet what to say to your book, and so have not mentioned it; probably they are afraid of stumbling over the Æolian harp[1] again, and are weighing every word they write in a pair of Lexicon-scales. Lord

[1] The writer in the 'Critical Review' (iv. 167) mistook the Lyre of Pindar for the Æolian harp, the instrument invented by Kircher about 1649.—Cunningham.

Nuneham, who maintained to me at first that everybody was charmed with your work, does own now that some folks begin to carp at it, had cause to dislike it, have had time to whisper their prejudices, no matter. Its merit does not depend on the competence of the present Age: you have fixed the method of biography, and whoever will write a life well must imitate you.

You have done another service that you are not aware of. I, who simpleton as I was, loved to be an Author, am so ashamed of my own stuff, and so convinced that nobody but you and Gray could write, have taken shame to myself, and forsworn the press; yet as I cannot be idle, it is impossible. I have invented a new and very harmless way of *making books*, which diverts me as well, and brings me to no disgrace. I have just made a *new book*, which costs me only money, which I don't value, and time, which I love to employ. It is a volume of etchings by *noble authors*. They are bound in robes of crimson and gold: the titles are printed at my own press, and the pasting is *by my own hand*. What I shall *compose* next I do not know. As you too seem to have given over writing, I wish you would draw for me, or etch; but with your variety of talents, perhaps you are making another match between two musical instruments. Is Mynheer Drum contracted with Signora Flageolet? or are you contriving how to make one mouth blow a trumpet, and sing at the same time? Mr. Bentley was always inventing new dishes by compounding heterogeneous ingredients, and called it cultivating the Materia Edica; for you geniuses hate the beaten road. He never would draw with common colours, or Indian ink, but being purely indolent too, always dipped his brush in the first thing he met, no matter whether the ashes, or the oil and vinegar, or all together, and ten to one but he tasted too, whether they would not make a good sauce, for cleanliness was not one of his delicacies.

I have been at all the Exhibitions, and do not find that we are got an inch nearer Raphael than we were. Sir Joshua has indeed produced the best portrait he ever painted, that of the Primate of Ireland,[1] whom age has softened into a beauty: all the painters are begging to draw him, as they did from Reynolds's Beggar-man. My brother [Sir Edward Walpole] has given me the view of Gray's tomb and churchyard, very prettily done, and inspired by Gray's own melancholy. I have hung it here in my favourite Blue Room, as a companion to Madame de Sevigné's Hotel de Carnavalet, and

[1] The fine half-length at Christ-Church, Oxford.—CUNNINGHAM.

call them my Penseroso and Allegro. Sir Edward was disappointed at your not revising his pentachord, for you inventors are jealous gods; but I assured him you had left town in a very few days after you were with him.

I am to dine on Monday at the hotel d'Harcourt.[1] The town says the father's kingdom is soon to be invaded by the Spaniards; but the Ministers, who certainly ought to know best, swear it is not true; so to be sure it is not.

I forgot to tell you that our friend Mrs. D. is one of the warmest admirers of 'Gray's Life;' but then she is equally charmed with Mrs. Chapone's writings, and thinks they will go a great way towards making the Bible fashionable. She lent them to me, but alas! they could not have so much effect on me, had I wanted it, for I could not read the Madam's works themselves.

Have you had your summer, as we have? The fine ladies did not dare to ride on the causeway from Wednesday was se'nnight till last Friday, for fear of being tanned. We are now relapsed to fires. Adieu.

Yours most devotedly,

H. W.

P.S. I like the hotel d'Harcourt; it has *grand air* and a kind of Louis XIV. old fashionhood that pleases me. There is a large garden and new *parterre*, and we want some *treillage* if the Irish Exchequer would afford it. Lord N[uneham] says, Oxford pouts at you as well as Cambridge. Lord Lyttelton does not admire. Mr. Palgrave, who was here this morning, says all the world admires, which is more than I demand. Pray, because you have written *the book*, do you never design to write anything else? Is the 'English Garden' to be a fragment, and do you expect that anybody should finish it and write your life, as well as you have done both for Gray?[2]

[1] Harcourt House, in Cavendish Square.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Aston, May 18th*, 1775.

I AM at last released from my York residence, and am returned from a disagreeable journey to Hull, on landed business of which I made nothing. I sit down quietly now for the first moment at Aston near Rotherham (pray remember that) and apply myself to the answering two of your letters, which before I could not possibly do; so pray forgive me, for I assure you I have behaved worse to the delegates of the press of the University of Oxford, and a Mr. Falconer (the, is to be, editor of Strabo), who

1503. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 17, 1775.

If you could not help writing, my dear Sir, to tell me of your want me to transcribe all Mr. Gray's Geographical Lucubrations, which as near as I can compute would make a book half as large as the 'Memoirs.'

The person you inquire after as the person Gray suspected of writing Colman's satire, is neither more nor less than the lively and spiritual Mr. Potenger, and as such pray book him.

What you say about my 'Memoirs' does not flatter me half so much as what you say about my pills. I think in time I shall rival Dr. Hill with his tincture of Splenwort: 'tis pity, however, that my medicine is not vendible. Do you think his Majesty would grant me a patent for it?

You say the University of Oxford pouts at me; I know not for why, but in revenge I'll tell you a story about them, which I think you cannot have heard. Last year a young Irish gentleman, Mr. Burgh,[1] who has for some time lived at York, writ a book, called 'A Scriptural Confutation of Mr. Lindsey's Apology,' defending the doctrine of the Trinity in a new and (as we orthodox divines say) masterly manner. To the second edition he set his name, and the University of Oxford met to consider of the propriety of giving him an honorary degree of Master of Arts. After much debate the intention was put off, *sine die*, at the very meeting when they gave Dr. Johnson a degree of Doctor of Laws. They said he had not laid sufficient stress on Natural Religion, but the true reason was that he had in a note abused David Hume, and in a Dedication to Edmund Burke, doubted a little whether the royal fountain of honour was much purer than ditch-water. I wish you would look into this Dedication, and also page 197 of his second edition. I think you would be pleased: *au reste*, I can only say that had he writ on any other subject, you would also have been more pleased; for he is a young man of the quickest parts and most general knowledge I ever met with. He is of the Irish House of Commons, brother-in-law to Mr. Hussey, and one of us *au merveil*. But is it not curious that, on a doctrinal point in which the Oxonians in particular so much interest themselves, they will not suffer a man to defend their cause, who has the misfortune to be a Whig! I take shame to myself for not having waited on Sir Edward Walpole before I left town, and am much obliged to you for having told a civil lie upon the occasion. But don't go to flirt at our Pentachords and our Cœlestinettes;[2] mind your noble etchings and your print shearings, and suffer us as well as yourself to ride our own hobby-horses quietly and discreetly.

I am now in the very act of making an electrical machine by the help of our village wheelwright. Go to! If I choose to amuse myself with electrifying mice, instead of writing second books of 'English Gardens,' who shall control me? I mean to write to Lord Nuneham soon to get me from France, Watelet's 'Essay on Gardening,' and *M. Chabanon sur la manie des jardins Anglois*. Perhaps you will deign to assist me in procuring me these two brochures; the sillier they are I shall like them the better. Believe me, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,
W. Mason.

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[1] William Burgh, LL.D., the friend and executor of Mason, and annotator of his poem 'The English Garden.' He died at York, 26th December, 1808.—Cunningham.

[2] The Cœlestinette was a musical instrument invented by Mason. When Mr. Mitford visited Aston, it was still remembered as resembling in shape the old spinette or harpsichord.—Cunningham.

nephew's arrival, I can as little help wishing you joy of it, though I wrote to you 'out last week. I told you how pleased and charmed you would be with him; and you must allow I am a good judge of the harmony of such natures as yours and his. Keep him as long as you can, and may the pure air of Florence restore Lady Lucy's health!

I have nothing of news to add to my last. The Ministers are easy about the Spanish fleet. For France, she has business of her own. There have been great tumults even in Paris on the dearness of corn. The King is already angry with his restored Parliament, who, fancying itself restored to liberty, took upon itself to examine the rioters. The new Well-beloved posted to his *lit de justice*, but was in such a passion that, though he attempted it four times, he could not speak; others may fancy, he wanted words from more causes than one. I saw a gentleman the other day just arrived from Paris, who says the clergy are suspected of having excited the commotions. The Ministers, who fear the return of the Duc de Choiseul, choose to impute them to him.

When I came out of town Lord Temple was thought dying. The Duchess of Northumberland is still alive.

By what you say of Mr. Seymour, the Pretender and his wife should be at Paris; is that so? All the English seem to be in love with her: at least the future Lord Temple[1] was so.

You have not more Masquerades in Carnival than we have; there is one at the Pantheon to-night, another on Monday; and in June is to be a pompous one on the water, and at Ranelagh. This and the first are given by the Club called the *Sçavoir Vivre*, who till now have only shone by excess of gaming. The leader is that fashionable orator Lord Lyttelton,[2] of whom I need not tell *you* more. I have done with these diversions, and enjoy myself here. Your old acquaintance, Lord and Lady Dacre, and your old friend Mr. Chute, dined with me to-day: poor Lord Dacre[3] is carried about, though not worse than he has been these twenty years. Strawberry was in great beauty; what joy I should have in showing it to you! Is this a wish I must never indulge? Alas!

I have had a long chain of thoughts since I wrote the last paragraph. They ended in smiling at the word *never*. How one pronounces it to the last moment! Would not one think I counted

[1] Richard Grenville, who became the second Earl Temple.—WALPOLE.
[2] Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton; he had been at Florence.—WALPOLE.
[3] Thomas Lennard Barret; his wife was sister of Lord Camden.—WALPOLE.

on a long series of years to come? Yet no man has the termination of all his views more before his eyes, or knows better the idleness of framing visions to one's self. One passes away so soon, and worlds succeed to worlds, in which the occupiers build the same castles in the air. What is ours but the present moment? And how many of mine are gone! And what do I want to show you? A plaything-vision, that has amused a poor transitory mortal for a few hours, and that will pass away like its master! Well, and yet is it not as sensible to conform to common ideas, and to live while one lives? Perhaps the wisest way is to cheat one's self. Did one concentre all one's thoughts on the nearness and certainty of dissolution, all the world would lie eating and sleeping like the savage Americans. Our wishes and views were given us to gild the dream of life, and if a Strawberry Hill can soften the decays of age, it is wise to embrace it, and due gratitude to the Great Giver to be happy with it. The true pain is the reflection on the numbers that are not so blessed; yet I have no doubt but the real miseries of life—I mean those that are unmerited and unavoidable,—will be compensated to the sufferers. Tyrants are a proof of an hereafter. Millions of men cannot be formed for the sport of a cruel child.

How happy is the Pretender in missing a Crown! When dead, he will have all the advantage that other Kings have, the being remembered; and that greater advantage, which Kings who die in their childhood have, historians will say, he would have been a great King if he had lived to reign; and that greatest advantage which so very few of them have, his reign will be stained with no crimes and blunders. If he is at Florence, pray recommend me to him for his historian; you see I have all the qualities a Monarch demands, I am disposed to flatter him. You may tell him too what I have done for his uncle Richard III. The deuce is in it, if I am not qualified for a Royal Historiographer, when I have whitewashed one of the very few whom my brethren, so contrary to their custom, have agreed to traduce. Adieu!

22nd.

Our papers will tell you, or your own, that the Queen of Denmark is dead—happily for her, I think, if she had any feeling. They say it was a rapid putrid fever. I know no more of it, for I am but this moment come to town to get my mourning.

1504. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

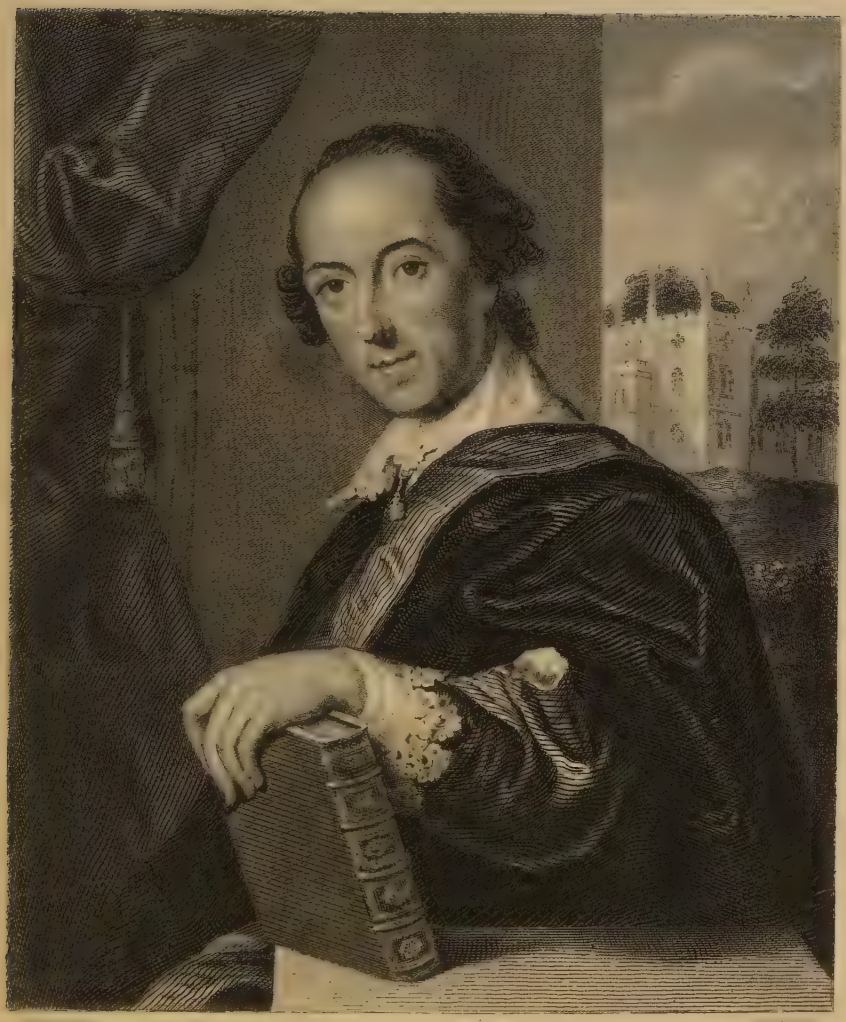
May 27, 1775.

To Mrs. Crewe,

By the Honourable Charles Fox.

Where the loveliest Expression to Feature is join'd,
By Nature's most delicate pencil design'd,
Where Blushes unbidden and Smiles without Art
Speak the sweetness and feeling that dwell in the heart;
Where in Manners enchanting no Blemish we trace,
But the Soul keeps the Promise we had from the Face,
Sure Philosophy, Reason, and Coldness must prove
Defences unequal to shield us from Love.
Then tell me, mysterious Enchanter, O tell
By what wonderful Art, or by what magic Spell,
My Heart is so fenced, that for once I am wise
And gaze without Madness on Amoret's eyes:
That my Wishes which never were bounded before,
Are here bounded by Friendship, and ask for no more.
Is it Reason? No, that my whole Life will belie,
For who so at variance as Reason and I?
Is't Ambition that fills up each Chink of my Heart,
Nor allows to one softer Sensation a Part?
Ah! no! for in this all the World must agree,
That one Folly was never sufficient for me.
Is my Mind on Distress so intensely employ'd?
Or by Pleasure relax'd or Variety cloy'd?
For, alike in this only, Enjoyment and Pain
Both slacken the Springs of the Nerves which they strain.
That I've felt each Reverse that from Fortune can flow,
That I've tasted each Bliss which the Happiest know,
Has still been the whimsical Fate of my Life,
Where Anguish and Joy have been ever at strife.
But though versed in th' extremes both of Pleasure and Pain,
I am still but too ready to feel them again.
If then for this once in my Life I am free,
And escape from a Snare might catch wiser than me,
'Tis that Beauty alone but imperfectly charms,
For though Brightness may dazzle, 'tis Kindness that warms.
As on Suns in the Winter with Pleasure we gaze,
But feel not their Force, though their Splendour we praise;
So Beauty our just Admiration may claim,
But Love, and Love only, our Hearts can inflame.

As I design to be very temperate in writing to you, you would not receive so sudden a return to yours, were it not to send you the foregoing verses, which, though current, are not yet got into the papers or magazines. I think you will like the ease and frankness of the lines, though they are not poetic: in that light, and as



HORACE WALPOLE.

characteristic, they are pretty original—so they are for being love-verses without love; the author's reason for not having which, is the worst part; and if poetry was peremptory logic, the inference would be that you must be in love with a woman before you can desire her: at least she must be in love with you, which I take to be seldom the case.

I am to have a longer copy of verses by Fitzpatrick, which I expect to like much, since he writes as easily as his friend, and is a more genuine poet. Lord Carlisle has written some too, to his wife's sister, Lady Louisa Leveson: I shall have them too, as a *noble* author's—but I have seen them and they are not worth sending; no more than some by Lord Palmerston, occasioned by others written some time ago by the Duchess of Devonshire when a girl to her father. These are a greater rarity, and I am laying out for them. Thank my stars I have done both with authorship and noble authors, for my Lord Lyttelton has printed a speech, though I thought we should not have had his till his execution. It is a poor affair, void of argument and grossly abusive on Lord Camden. It will be as difficult for the Court to uphold his oratory as his character, if he has recourse to the press.

Burke has printed a second speech, which I prefer much to his first. It is grave, solid, temperate, and chaster from exuberant imagination. If his fancy breaks out, it does not soar above the third heaven and come tumbling down flat. *Apropos* to authors, the husband of Mrs. Montagu of Shakespeareshire is dead, and has left her an estate of seven thousand pounds a year in her own power. Will you come and be a candidate for her hand? I conclude it will be given to a champion at some Olympic games, and were I she, I would sooner marry you than Pindar.

The history of the Heroine Kingston, as registered in our daily Chronicles, is literally authentic, and so is the respect paid to her in the King's Bench, though, I suppose, penned by herself,

> For little Brimstones oft submit to fate,
> That great ones may enjoy the world in state.[1]

The intrepidity of her countenance, while her indictment was being read, was worthy of Joan of Arc. I am persuaded she will avoid any further trial.

[1] Where little villains must submit to fate,
That great ones may enjoy the world in state.
Garth. The Dispensary.—CUNNINGHAM.

Thank you for your Oxonian anecdotes, but alas! they may be paralleled all over the kingdom. In return I will write next week to France for the two tracts you wot of: you shall not be idle for want of any thing I can pimp for.

I am happily embarked on two vast folios of the 'History of Dorsetshire,' which I prefer to every author of the age but one. I have picked up some excellent narratives of Mr. Bruce, but have not room for them; but here is what is better. He was asked before George Selwyn if the Abyssinians have any music? he replied, they have one *Lyre*. Selwyn whispered his neighbour, "They have one less since he left their country." Adieu! I remove to Strawberry to-morrow.

Yours ever,
H. W.

1505. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1775

I AM delighted in your satisfaction with your nephew; and now begin to fear the pain you will have in parting with him and his amiable family. The Emperor's presence will not compensate the loss, for you feel more in your private capacity than your public, though you are so excellent a *diplomatique*. You must lower your royal crest a little, for your Majesty's forces have received a check in America; but this is too sad a subject for mirth. I cannot tell you anything very positively: the Ministers, nay the orthodox Gazette, holds its tongue. This day se'nnight it was divulged by a London Evening-Post extraordinary, that a ship on its way to Lisbon happened to call *at* England, and left some very wonderful accounts, nay, and affidavits, saying, to wit, that General Gage had sent nine hundred men to nail up the cannon and seize a magazine at Concord; of which the accidental captain owns, two cannon were spiked or damaged. An hundred and fifty Americans, who swear they were fired on first, disliked the proceeding, returned blows, and drove back the party. Lord Percy was despatched to support them, but new recruits arriving, his Lordship sent for better advice, which he received, and it was, to retire, which he did. The King's troops lost an hundred and fifty, the enemy not an hundred. The captain was sent for to be examined, but refused. He says, Gage sent away a sloop four days before he sailed, which sloop, I suppose, is gone to Lisbon, for in eight days we have no news of it. The public were

desired by authority to suspend their belief; but their patience is out, and they persist in believing the first account, which seems the rather probable, in that, another account is come of the mob having risen at New York, between anger and triumph, and have seized, unloaded, and destroyed the cargoes of two ships that were going with supplies to Gage; and, by all accounts, that whole continent is in a flame.

So here is this fatal war commenced!

> The child that is unborn shall rue
> The hunting of that day!

We are perfectly easy about Spain's armada, and say that too is bound for Lisbon. The Prince of Masserano is arrived, and no doubt condemns our rebellious colonists highly. Those gentlemen do not seem to be at all afraid of your question, whether they could not be sent for over, and tried. A colonel of their Militia has sworn before a justice of peace that he ordered his men to fire on the King's troops, and has sent over a copy of his affidavit—perhaps in hopes of being knighted.

Well, we don't mind all this—we the nation. We go on diverting ourselves, and are to have a regatta on the Thames the end of this month. The French are grown philosophers, and we dance. Tell your sorrowful friend Mrs. [Anne] Pitt, and the afflicted widow [the Countess of Orford], that English ladies cry no longer. Low spirits are out of fashion. We have transplanted every folly under the heavens hither. We have had fandangos, and festinos, and regattas. If the Americans provoke us, we will sail forth in our Bucentaur and cuckold them with their spouse the Atlantic.

This is a gazette extraordinary, so need not be long; besides, I have been here these four days all alone, and know nothing but what the newspapers tell me. If it were not for you, I should not know there was such a person in the world as the Emperor. Our neighbour King Louis is gone to be crowned. He was besieged for three days in Versailles by twenty thousand men, and in danger of Lord Peterborough's[1] Sacre, who, when he was shown the Sainte Ampoulle at Rheims, and the monk asked him, "Monsieur, est-ce-que vous sacrez vos Rois?" replied, "Non, Monsieur, nous les massacrons." Insurrections in France! insurrections in Bohemia!

[1] Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, celebrated by Pope.—WALPOLE.

insurrections in America! methinks the world is subject to centenary fevers! Adieu! the Horatii! I quite enjoy your mutual satisfaction in each other.

1506 TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1775.

I AM extremely concerned, dear Sir, to hear you have been so long confined by the gout. The painting of your house may, from the damp, have given you cold—I don't conceive that paint can affect one otherwise, if it does not make one sick, as it does me of all things. Dr. Heberden[1] (as every physician, to make himself talked of, will set up some new hypothesis,) pretends that a damp house, and even damp sheets, which have ever been reckoned fatal, are wholesome: to prove his faith he went into his own new house totally unaired, and survived it. At Malvern, they certainly put patients into sheets just dipped in the spring—however, I am glad you have a better proof that dampness is not mortal, and it is better to be too cautious than too rash. I am perfectly well and expect to be so for a year and a half—I desire no more of the bootikins than to curtail my fits.

Thank you for the note from 'North's Life,' though, having reprinted my 'Painters,' I shall never have an opportunity of using it. I am still more obliged to you for the offer of an Index to my 'Catalogue'—but, as I myself know exactly where to find everything in it, and as I dare to say nobody else will want it, I shall certainly not put you to that trouble.

Dr. Glynn will certainly be most welcome to see my house, and shall, if I am not at home:—still I had rather know a few days before, because else he may happen to come when I have company, as I have often at this time of the year, and then it is impossible to let it be seen, as I cannot ask my company, who may have come to see it too, to go out, that somebody else may see it, and I should be very sorry to have the Doctor disappointed. These difficulties, which have happened more than once, have obliged me to give every ticket for a particular day; therefore, if Dr. Glynn will be so good as to advertise me of the day he intends to come here, with a direction, I shall send him word what day he can see it.

[1] Dr. William Heberden, the distinguished physician and medical writer, who died on the 17th of March, 1801, at the age of ninety-one.—WRIGHT.

I have just run through the two vast folios of 'Hutchins's Dorsetshire.'[1] He has taken infinite pains; indeed, all but those that would make it entertaining.

Pray can you tell me anything of some relations of my own, the Burwells? My grandfather married Sir Jeffery Burwell's daughter, of Rougham, in Suffolk. Sir Jeffery's mother, I imagine, was daughter of a Jeffery Pitman, of Suffolk; at least I know there was such a man in the latter, and that we quarter the arms of Pitman. But I cannot find who Lady Burwell, Sir Jeffery's wife, was. Edmondson has searched in vain in the Heralds' Office; and I have outlived all the ancient of my family so long, that I know not of whom to inquire, but you of the neighbourhood. There is an old walk in the Park at Houghton, called "Sir Jeffery's Walk," where the old gentleman used to teach my father (Sir Robert) his book. Those very old trees encouraged my father to plant at Houghton. When people used to try to persuade him nothing would grow there, he said, Why will not other trees grow as well as those in Sir Jeffery's Walk?—Other trees have grown to some purpose! Did I ever tell you that my father was descended from Lord Burleigh? The latter's grand-daughter, by his son Exeter, married Sir Giles Allington, whose daughter married Sir Robert Crane, father of Sir Edward Walpole's wife. I want but Lady Burwell's name to make my genealogic tree shoot out stems every way. I have recovered a barony in fee, which has no defect but in being antecedent to any summons to Parliament, that of the Fitz Osberts; and on my mother's side it has mounted the Lord knows whither by the Philipps's to Henry VIII. and has sucked in Dryden for a great-uncle:[2] and by Lady Philipps's mother, Darcy, to Edward III. and there I stop for brevity's sake—especially as Edward III. is a second Adam; who almost is not descended from Edward? as posterity will be from Charles II. and all the princes in Europe from James I. I am the first antiquary of my race. People don't know how entertaining a study it is. Who begot whom is a most amusing kind of hunting; one recovers a grandfather instead of breaking one's own neck—and then one grows so pious to the memory of a thousand persons one never heard of before. One finds how Christian

[1] 'The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset.' London: 1774, in two volumes, folio. A second edition, corrected, augmented, and improved, by Richard Gough and John Bowyer Nichols, in four volumes, folio, appeared in 1796. 1815.—Wright.

[2] The Dryden relationship is a little too closely stated.—Cunningham.

names came into a family, with a world of other delectable erudition. You cannot imagine how vexed I was that Blomefield[1] died before he arrived at Houghton—I had promised myself a whole crop of notable ancestors—but I think I have pretty well unkennelled them myself. Adieu! Yours ever.

P.S. I found a family of Whaplode in Lincolnshire who give our arms, and have persuaded myself that Whaplode is a corruption of Walpole, and came from a branch when we lived at Walpole in Lincolnshire.

1507. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[2]

Strawberry Hill, June 14, 1775.

Having been absent hence a few days, I have but just now received your Lordship's most kind note with the direction, or should certainly have thanked you sooner, as I do most gratefully. I shall as gladly obey your commands before you go to Ireland, and will take the liberty of writing to know if my visit will not be unseasonable.

I am exceedingly concerned to hear of Lady Nuneham's loss, and when it is proper will entreat your Lordship to say how very much I interest myself in whatever touches her Ladyship.

Mr. Fitzpatrick has written a 'Town Eclogue,' and has let me print it. The subject is not new, but as the versification is very good, I thought it might divert a melancholy quarter of an hour at Nuneham, and therefore enclose. I know it is not just the moment for mentioning it, or I would say how very preferably my press might be employed, if I could have my earnest wish. How sincerely do I say what is reduced to a common ceremony, that I am with the greatest regard your Lordship's, &c.

[1] The Rev. Francis Blomefield, the author of an 'Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk,' which was left unfinished by him, and continued by the Rev. Charles Parkin. It was first printed in five folio volumes, 1739-1773. A second edition, in eleven volumes, octavo, appeared in 1805-1810.—Wright.

[2] Now first published.—Cunningham.

1508. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Friday night, 11 *o'clock, June* 23, 1775.

You was much in the right indeed, Madam, not to come to town for the foolish regatta, as I did, and of which I have seen no more than I do now. I went at six o'clock to Richmond House, and it was beautiful to see the Thames covered with boats, barges, and streamers, and every window and house-top loaded with spectators. I suppose so many will not meet again till the day of judgment, which was not to-day.

In the middle of the river was a street of lighters and barges covered with pent-houses like a carpenter's yard, which totally prevented all the other millions seeing anything. The rowers passed through this street, and so we never beheld them at all. It rained once or twice and cleared the gardens and shores, and now all the company is stewing in Ranelagh. A great deal of the show was spoilt by everybody being in black; it looked like a general mourning for Amphitrite, rather than for the Queen of Denmark. The corps diplomatique was in the Lord Mayor's barge. There are such tides of people in the streets, that I could scarce pass home. I feel as glad to be returned as I did from the Coronation, and I think will go to no more sights.

I know nothing more to tell your Ladyship. The town says it expects an embassy to Lord Chatham. I will not come to see his entry, for I have still less curiosity about Ministers than puppet-shows. In truth I grow so old or so indolent, or so both, that I prefer the tranquillity of Strawberry to almost everything. But I will not tire your Ladyship with my own negativeness. I write only to prove what I hope is not necessary, how constantly you are in my mind, and that I would tell you anything amusing if I knew it.

1509. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, July 6, 1775.

A month is elapsed since I wrote to you, I know; nor am I eager to resume the correspondence, when I have nothing pleasant to tell you. Indeed, can the events of a civil war ever be welcome news?

One must be deeply embarked on one side or the other, if one ever rejoices. They who wish well to the whole, can have but one cheerful moment, which is that of peace—a moment that seems at great distance! I know no details, for I enquire not after them. The general complexion is war. All advices speak the Americans determined, and report says the Government here intends to pursue the same plan. I told you at first, I thought you and I should not see the end of this breach; and if we do not, I know what posterity will see, the ruin of both countries, at least of this. Can we support the loss of America, or a long war?

There is a black cloud nearer. The Livery of London have begun a quarrel with the King, and have actually proclaimed war on his Ministers, as you will see by the papers. I do not take panic; but, if any blow should happen from America, the mob of London is a formidable foe on a sudden: a Minister may be executed before he is impeached; and, considering the number of American merchants in the City, and of those who have connexions in America, riots may be raised: but I hate to prophesy. I have always augured ill of this quarrel, and washed my hands of it. It has made me resume a thought, which my age and indolence do not incline me to, another journey to Paris. You will, perhaps, hear I am setting out before my usual period of writing. There is another person[1] going abroad that rejoices me more, and who, I am sure, had better be out of England at this crisis. He is extremely well at present, yet certainly should not risk the winter here; he proposes to pass the next at Rome. I should like myself to spend it at Paris, but dare not hazard the gout out of my own house, unless things grow still more serious. I have long been sick of politics; when they are so very grave, they are painful; and though I have nothing to do with them, the ill-humour they occasion, and the perpetual discourse on them, are exceedingly disagreeable to one whose whole wishes are centred in repose.

I am come this morning from Lord Dacre's, where I lay last night, and return to my peaceful hill to-morrow. I will not read history there, but romances; and if the present age is determined the former shall be written in bloody characters, I will read as little of it as I can. During the first part of my life, all was peace and happiness. The middle was a scene of triumph. I am sorry to think the last volume so likely to resemble a considerable part of

[1] The Duke of Gloucester.—WALPOLE.

our story. Who can wish to have lived during the wars of York and Lancaster; or from 1641 to 1660?

1510. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, July 7, 1775.

It is strange to say, Madam, that I who generally know my own mind as soon as I have a mind, and who am a very methodical general, have not yet settled the plan of my operations for my summer campaign. One of my expeditions will certainly be to Ampthill; but I cannot precisely say when, as I have not fixed the day when my squadron is to sail for the coast of France, which is to be the great *coup* of my measures. I do not stay to join or to watch the Spanish Armada, nor wait for the result of the American Congress; but a little business of my own throws uncertainty into all my deliberations, and is so little a business, that, like greater men, I am forced to disguise the true cause, and give it dignity by a veil of mystery. I have indeed already taken the field, for I came yesterday from Lord Dacre's, in Essex, where I stayed but one night, and am returning to my head-quarters. I found nobody and heard nothing here, but a new rebuff given us by the Americans—I will not tell you where, because geography is not my fort, nor circumstances my talent; but they have burnt a schooner, and driven General Gage's devils out of a herd of swine, who ran violently into the sea, and lo! is not the place called Hog Island to this day?

Pray, Madam, have you read the 'Correspondents?' I never heard of the book till two days ago. I think one cannot doubt the letters being genuine; but who has been so cruel as to publish them? and yet, except a little weakness, and it is very little to have but a little, there is nothing that can reflect but on the publishers. Methinks, when it is scandalous to open a private letter, they who publish private letters stand in a very foul predicament, while the authors are living and may be hurt by them. Do not the publishers accuse themselves of robbing or treachery? and by concealing themselves of a very black design? The publication in question comprehends many of these offences, for it appears by the letters that the authors were much afraid of their being seen, though more goodness of heart appears than anything else. Merciful! if all the foolish things one writes in confidence were to be recorded! For my part

I never care how silly I am in my letters, as I trust nonsense carries its own mortality along with it. At least if one is supposed to have common sense, one may trust, as Sir Godfrey Kneller did about his wretched daubings, that people will say, "Oh! to be sure these could not be his." I am not averse to preaching a little on this subject, my Lady, because—but somebody knocks. Good morrow, Madam.

1511. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, July 9, 1775.

The whole business of this letter would lie in half a line. Shall you have room for me on Tuesday the 18th? I am putting myself into motion that I may go farther. I told Madame du Deffand how you had scolded me on her account, and she has charged me to thank you, and tell you how much she wishes to see you, too. I would give anything to go—But the going!—However, I really think I shall—But I grow terribly affected with a *maladie de famille*, that of taking root at home.

I did but put my head into London on Thursday, and more bad news from America.[1] I wonder when it will be bad enough to make folks think it so, without going on! The Stocks, indeed, begin to grow a little nervous, and they are apt to affect other pulses. I heard this evening here that the Spanish fleet is sailed, and that we are not in the secret whither—but I don't answer for Twickenham gazettes, and I have no better. I have a great mind to tell you a Twickenham story; and yet it will be good for nothing, as I cannot send you the accent in a letter. Here it is, and you must try to set it to the right emphasis. One of our Maccaronis is dead, a Captain Mawhood, the tea-man's son. He had quitted the army, because his comrades called him Captain Hyson, and applied himself to learn the classics and freethinking; and was always disputing with the parson of the parish about Dido and his own soul. He married Miss Paulin's warehouse, who had six hundred a year; but, being very much out of conceit with his own canister, could not reconcile himself to her riding-hood—so they parted beds in three nights. Of late he has taken to writing comedies, which everybody was welcome to hear him read, as he could get nobody to act them. Mrs. Mawhood has

[1] Of the commencement of hostilities with the Americans at Lexington on the 19th of April.—Wright.

a friend, one Mrs. V * * *, a mighty plausible good sort of body, who feels for everybody, and a good deal for herself, is of a certain age, wears well, has some pretensions that she thinks very reasonable still, and a gouty husband. Well! she was talking to Mr. Raftor [Mrs. Clive's brother] about Captain Mawhood a little before he died. "Pray, Sir, does the Captain ever communicate his writings to Mrs. Mawhood?"—"Oh, dear no, Madam; he has a sovereign contempt for her understanding."—"Poor woman!"—"And pray, Sir,—give me leave to ask you: I think I have heard that they very seldom sleep together?"—"Oh, never, Madam! Don't you know all that?"—"*Poor woman!*"—I don't know whether you will laugh; but Mr. Raftor, who tells a story better than anybody,[1] made me laugh for two hours. Good night!

1512. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1775.

I HAVE been so constantly here and know so little, that if I told you what I do know, it would be but a transcript of the newspapers. The general opinion is that the war is to be pursued: and so far we and the Americans agree that the news in the meadows (our Mall) last night was, that the Congress has taken the same resolution; and as they have not quite so far to send troops, will probably be a little more alert in putting their resolutions in execution. The Admiral, I was told, too, thinks he shall be desired to convey the garrison of Boston, not into the heart of the Colonies, but home. I am amazed the Parliament does not meet and vote that this will be a breach of the Act of Navigation. The Colonies are really so cowardly, that they go on like the old song, beating those who never beat them in their lives, and have driven away all the cattle from General Gage's Smithfield, and burnt a schooner that he sent to defend them. As the Stocks have shown no sensibility till now, I suppose some rich *butcher* has sold out. This is all I can tell you of politics.

To your other question, I doubt I shall not see Yorkshire this summer. I am actually thinking of a tour to Paris; and if I do go, it will be before the end of August. Shall I bring you a slice of their English gardens? or a whole one second-hand? They may be out of fashion by this time, and the moment anything is, they sell it.

[1] So the MS. note of Lord Nuneham, quoted in vol. ii. p. 458.—CUNNINGHAM.

Has a little book called the 'Correspondents' strolled so far north? It is a singular publication, and an abominable one; at least I suspect the motive to be so. They are letters between a late grave noble author and his daughter-in-law, before she married his son: they are perfectly innocent, and very good and very wise; but the spirit was not always entirely uppermost. They seem to be genuine, but if they are, one must guess and abhor the publisher.

Mrs. Wood publishes an Essay, which her husband[1] showed me and I liked, on Homer's country. My late brethren, the Antiquaries, have given a third volume, with some pretty plates of horns, and some trifling trinkets, dissertations on cockfighting and shoeing horses, and half a volume on their print of the interview in the Vale of Cloth of Gold, and the room at Cowdry, in which I am censured for liking it only as a curiosity and not as a picture, though there is no more perspective or drawing than in an Indian screen. To stamp my doom, in the index is said, *the Cowdry picture defended against Mr. W.*—see what it is to try to teach owls to be singing-birds! I was the first soul that ever endeavoured to introduce a little taste into English Antiquities, and had persuaded the world not to laugh at our Hearnes and Hollingsheds, and the graceless loggerheads fly in my face! but I have left them to themselves, and could not have left them in worse hands.

This letter is only chaperon to a parcel that I must beg you to convey to Peckitt at York, and which I send open to save troubling you with the purport: (is not this an *Iricism ?*) when you have read it or not, as you please, you will be so good as to seal it.

July 12th.

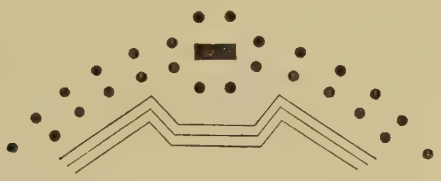
Since I began my letter two days ago, I have taken my resolution; and shall set out on the 14th of next month, to be back in the beginning of October, by which time I suppose you will have frightened the Americans out of their senses, or the Americans the Ministers into theirs.

I have not yet seen the Reviews for this month; those of the last were exceedingly civil to you. One piece of service you have rendered me. The proprietor of the asterisk on Lord Clarendon's 'History' has certainly reconnoitred himself, for he has not called on

[1] Robert Wood (died 1771), whose epitaph at Putney was written by Walpole at the request of his widow. "His beautiful editions of Balbec and Palmyra will survive," says Walpole, "those august remains." See the Epitaph in Lysons's 'Environs,' *art.* 'Putney.'—CUNNINGHAM.

me since the publication, though very civil when we meet, yet never opening his mouth on that subject. I bear this misfortune with great philosophy, as I always do everything I do not care about.

My Lord Rochester [Pearce] has consulted me for an altar-piece for the choir at Westminster. I have suggested an octagon canopy of open arches, like Chichester Cross, to be elevated on a flight of steps, with the altar in the middle, and semicircular arcades to join the stalls, so that the Confessor's Chapel and tombs may be seen through in perspective. His Lordship, indeed, wanted to remove that whole chapel, but his Chapter luckily opposed. Here is the ground-plot of my idea: if you approve it you may draw the elevation as beautifully as you please.[1]



[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, June 17, 1775.

You are goodness itself for sending me what you have sent me: I thank you for the French before I read it. Let the books be as bad as you say, they may perhaps lead one to think of something better; if they don't, you know, there is no harm done. With respect to the English, I think much the same about them as you do; the young cub's [Fox's] is certainly the best; it has something of character and originality about it. The other is the most old-fashioned thing to be written by a young man of fashion that I ever read. He [Fitzpatrick] might have writ it in a full-bottomed wig, a cravat and roll-ups. And Sir Conyers Darcy, had he been alive, might have admired it, and carried it to Lady Betty Germaine, as a *jeu d'esprit* of my Lord Lansdowne's. If my friend Mr. Kirgate had not dated it, I should have thought it printed somewhere about the four last years of Queen Anne. *Explicit* my criticism.

You are always telling me of your additional noble authors, and do not mention one worth all the rest of the bunch:—I mean my neighbour here, Lord Effingham. Was there ever anything, ancient or modern, better, either in sentiment or language, than his late speech! I have one miserable defect in my constitution, which is that I never could bear above one pint of port at a sitting—a bottle was always too much for me; else I would incontinently introduce myself to his lordship by an Ode, and he should be my Pollio. I would hope to be one of his club at Boston Castle,[2] and try to leap a five-barred gate with his lady. Seriously though, is it not a pity that a man of such integrity and ability should be what he is?

A man who styles himself Philo Gray of Salisbury, has twitted me in the newspaper

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[2] A room which he built about two years ago on a fine brow of a hill, between this place and Rotherham, which commands much the best prospect in this county. He christened it Boston Castle, because no tea was ever to be drank in it. The statute is religiously observed.—MITFORD.

1513. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

Strawberry Hill, July 18, 1775.

I SHALL be at Park-place next week, my dear Lord, and if you assure me that I shall not be troublesome either to Lady Nuneham or yourself, I will have the honour of passing a night at Nuneham,

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

for not publishing a complete edition of Gray, because I have omitted the stanzas on a Decayed Statesman [Fox, Lord Holland]. You must take this sin of mine upon your own back; I suspect it is Almon, in order to sell his own 'Foundling Hospital of Wit,' where those verses are printed.

Mr. James Boswell, the friend of Paoli and Dr. Johnson, has writ me a very Scotch letter about Gray's character, to tell me it was written by a friend of his, Mr. Temple,[2] and that he put it into the 'London Magazine' without his leave. I writ him a very plain English answer, which I hope will quit me of this correspondent. My Oxonian correspondence about Strabo is also at an end, which I rejoice at, for I have had so many letters to answer, which these 'Memoirs' have occasioned, that I have hardly had time to write to those whom I love to write to.

Though I am a Freemason, I am not a Grand-Master, and therefore cannot myself call the Lodge you wish me to call.

Pray send me all the news you can about America. I take for granted that by this time Gage must be on shipboard. Is there no chance of your coming down to Wentworth Castle this summer? I hear Lord Strafford is now there. I hope the present warm weather contents you, and that you begin to think our good planet has not been pushed so far out of its former orbit, as some philosophers have suspected. Everything here gives us the prospect of plenty, and we are not in the least burnt up. Believe me, dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

W. MASON.

Is Lord Nuneham still in town? I have not yet written to him. Shame! shame!

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, July 31, 1775.

I AM glad that you are going to France; not because you are going to France, but because the intention indicates that you are in good health and spirits; and since you will not come into Yorkshire, you may as well be in France as at Strawberry, as to my particular interest in the matter. Besides, I look upon myself as having a kind of hereditary right in your correspondence while abroad, which may make amends for certain excellent letters I returned you heretofore, and which had I retained I should have read at least once a year with fresh delight, and not have envied people who relish Madame Sevigné, who you know is beyond my taste, to my shame be it spoken.

I have no commission to give you, except, peradventure, you could smuggle me over Monsieur Watelet's twelve little boats that support his bridge, with all the *caisses garnies de fleurs*, and his *treillages en lozange peintes en blanc*. I have lately dug a horsepond, to which I think such a bridge would make a good accompaniment.

[2] Compare Boswell's 'Letters to Temple,' 8vo, 1856, p. 206.—CUNNINGHAM.

and asking your commands to Paris, whither I am going next month,—with great satisfaction in one respect, the certainty of finding the hotel d'Harcourt open next winter. I should be ashamed of such a trip at my age, if it was not to see an older person; yet I shall not go *incog.* and call myself *Dr. W.*,[1] but what I always am, &c.

1514. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 23, 1775.

Lady, thou lettest not thy servant depart in peace! but you must. My pen is truly grown a *grey* goose-quill, and has lost its pith. It never had much imagination, and what it had is gone. Indolence has taken total possession, and comprises my whole story. I have done nothing but bask in the sun, gather hampers of orange-

[1] In allusion to the Earl of Bute's having travelled (in imitation of Princes) *incognito* under an assumed title.—Cunningham.

I wish you would go see his Laurentin, and describe it to me in your English, for I do not well comprehend his French. He says it is but *une heure de distance de la ville;* if by *ville* he means Paris as we say town, surely you might easily take the expedition. But before you go, I wish you would enquire amongst my brethren of the Church, whether the Archbishop of Canterbury has prepared a form of prayer with thanksgiving for our late victory. I want to know this, that I may sit down and write my Fast sermon, and be in readiness for that solemnity. I take it for granted his Majesty will go to Paul's, and I am sorry I resigned my chaplainship, else I might have got my Lord Holdernesse's interest to preach before him on the occasion. If the Bishops sit down in good earnest to write a proper Form, I think they should mix Thanksgiving and Fasting together; there would be something new in the idea; it would be like a supper of hot and cold, which I believe the French cooks call an *ambigu.*

You did not see the 'London Review' by Dr. Kenrick, else you would have been convinced what a very mediocre poet Gray was, and what a bold panegyrist I am to dare to commend his poetry. The world, I believe, are of the Doctor's opinion, for the second edition is not half sold. No matter, if they will but continue to buy my Lord Chesterfield's 'Letters,' Dodsley and I shall be satisfied.

I like your idea for the high altar of Westminster so prodigiously, that I am sure it will never be executed, at least not in our day. When our popish sons of Canada shall have helped us to conquer our puritan sons of Boston, they will perhaps choose to conquer their heretical mother of England, and then Chichester Cross will walk to Westminster Abbey. When I began to write this sentence, I never thought it would conclude so like a prophecy; therefore I do believe it will be a true prophecy, for it certainly flowed from an unpremeditated pen.

I will not wish you a good voyage, because I hope to hear from you again before you embark. I mean to visit my Lord Strafford to-morrow, when I fancy we shall be unfashionable enough to drink your health. I forwarded your armorial parcel to Peckitt immediately, and am, dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

W. Mason.

flowers, and enjoy this celestial summer. I believe Joshua has bid the sun stand still, for there has not been a bad day since the first of December. I had rather impute my supineness to this Asiatic season than to the fifty-seven winters I have known; but I must burst my chains and go to Paris, which I doubt I shall not find a *fontaine de Jouvence.*

I have dined at Muswell Hill [at Topham Beauclerk's], and the next day the Beauclerks, Miss Lloyd and I, went to Old Windsor to see poor Mr. Bateman's auction.[1] It was a melancholy sight to me in more lights than one. I have passed many pleasing days there with him and Lady Hervey, and felt additional pain by reflections on my child Strawberry!

All pulled to pieces, and sold by the person he loved and left it to! So was poor Lady Hervey treated! I bought her picture there, left for sale. Indeed, Lord Bateman made amends, for he left his own and his house's portraits there too for sale, with a lot of shalots, four acres of beans, and a parcel of human bones! This is a golden age literally, and one should not wonder if the people sold their children as the Negroes do. I purchased a cargo of ancient chairs, and they at least have found a resting-place in their old age. The Beauclerks and the Virgin returned and passed two days here. On Wednesday I go to Park-place and Nuneham; but I perceive I shall lose my place of gazetteer to your Ladyship. Perhaps you will think I am going to have a better, when I tell you an excellent story and quote my author, Lord North. Mr. Cambridge, with all his propensity to credit new-imported marvels, was struck with hearing Mr. Bruce affirm having sent some camels to Abyssinia, and suspended his faith till the fact could be examined. He galloped to Soame Jenyns, and begged to have the registers of exportation in the Board of Trade searched. After some days, Jenyns wrote to tell him that he had scrutinised all the records relating to Philadelphia, Carolina, Virginia, &c. &c., and did indeed find a prodigious number of the species in question had gone to all those provinces, but that they did not spell their names like the *Camels* he wotted of.

Well, Madam, if I have moulted my activity, at least my obedience remains in full feather. You say you have written and sealed your justification of yourself and your opinion of the 'Correspondents,' but I am sure I have received no such letter. I will say

[1] Dicky Bateman (see vol. iii. p. 429) died 1st March, 1773.—CUNNINGHAM.

no more on mine; I have no affectation about them; you see I answer the moment I receive yours, and the nonsense in waiting always serves to fill them. If they are preserved, they will prove that I took no care of my reputation, and that your Ladyship had not the best taste in the world in being content with such letters. One comfort the worst writers may have, that, if their follies are handed down, the devil will be in it if any mortal can read a hundred-thousandth part of what is written; and it signifies little whether such things are burnt or slumber on the shelves of a library.

1515. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 3, 1775.

I CAN tell your Ladyship nothing about the 'Correspondents' but what I *don't* know, which is what people generally tell.

I did believe the letters genuine, and that they passed between the old Lord and his daughter-in-law before she was so. Now it seems the executors deny their authenticity, so I do not believe it any longer, because anybody is at least better authority than everybody; for one person *may* speak truth, which all the world rarely does. I know still less of Lady Luxborough's 'Letters,' but expect to be diverted. I remember her wearing her little wizen husband's picture in her great black bush of hair;[1] then she fell in love with Parson Dalton[2] for his poetry, and they rhymed together till they chimed; and then I never saw or heard of her any more, till she revived in Mr. Shenstone's 'Letters,' and was a great performer in his ballad 'Arcadia.' I think these materials promise, considering too that the heroine was sister both of Lord Bolingbroke[3] and Hollis St. John. I expect a mixture of Mrs. Eliza Thomas, Machiavel, and Shuter.

I certainly did not send you, Madam, Lady Craven's verses, nor intend it, though they are extremely pretty. She did not give me leave, and without it you know I would not. Nay, I don't think I should even with her permission, for she makes an Apollo of me,

[1] Compare Walpole to Miss Berry, Sept. 4, 1789.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] John Dalton, tutor to the son of Frances Thynne, Countess of Hertford and Duchess of Somerset. He was Prebendary of Worcester, and Rector of St. Mary-at-Hill, London, and died 21st July, 1763. He adapted to the stage Milton's 'Comus.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] She was half-sister of the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke.—CUNNINGHAM.

and, if the eight other Muses called me so too, I would not accept the title without any pretensions.

Tuesday se'nnight is fixed for my voyage. I doubt it will not be in my power to see Ampthill till my return.

I am in great distress, with a near relation dying in my house. You have heard me mention Mrs. Daye: they have let her come from Chichester in the last stage of an asthma and dropsy. I can neither leave her here with only servants, nor know how to convey her back; but I will not disturb your happiness with melancholy stories, Madam. For political mishaps, they are very endurable. One loves one's country, but then one takes no more part than comes to the share of an individual; besides, when one has lived a good while, events strike one the less. I have seen my country's barometer up at Minden and down at Derby; I have worn laurels and crackers, and sackcloth and ashes. At last I am grown like sauntering Jack, and bear revolutions with much philosophy:

> My billet at the fire is found,
> Whoever is deposed or crown'd;

but I go no farther; one has griefs enough of one's own, without fretting because Cousin America has eloped with a Presbyterian parson.

I have crammed my cloister with three cart-loads of lumbering chairs from Mr. Bateman's, and at last am surfeited with the immovable movables of our forefathers.

Thank you for advising me, Madam, not to trust to anybody's love. In good truth I am cured of that as well as of other delusions, and so will Mr. Crawfurd be if he lives as long. I hope he will meet me at Paris. I seldom ask him to come hither, because I cannot amuse him, and because he would only disappoint me if he promised to come. There are few I have a better opinion of, or have more good-will to, and he is sure he is welcome whenever he likes to come; but I care so little about the present age, which is all he can care about, that I conclude young people can only be civil and weary of me, and therefore never press myself upon them.

When I return from Paris I shall have some novelty, and you shall see me as modernised as possible. If Marshal Richelieu has a cask of pink and sable plumes, I will have one too. I will learn to sing the freshest couplets, and will be as accurate as Lady Mary Coke in all the ceremonial of Madame Clotilde's espousals, though I fear the good old form of her going to bed with the ambassador's leg is out of fashion, though

a Christian nudity of excellent edification. Well, now we are talking of weddings, &c., I shall take the liberty of transcribing the following lines, which Lord Huntingdon found on the window of an inn, and gave to Mr. Conway. Some tender swain had written very illegibly his fair one's name in this usual aubergical exclamation :

Adorable Miss Priscilla Plaw !

Another unfeeling savage wrote under,[1]

* * * * * *

I found Lady Jersey at Nuneham, with a pretty little girl, who will be the picture of her father as soon as she cuts her nose, and is bigger already. There was Mr. Whitehead, the Laureate, too, who, I doubt, will be a little puzzled, if he has no better a victory than the last against Cæsar's next birth-day. There was a little too much of the *vertere funeribus triumphos* for a complimentary ode in the last action.

I hear that the Congress have named General Washington generalissimo, with two thousand a year and five pounds a day for his table ; he desired to be excused receiving the two thousand. If these folks will imitate both the Romans and Cromwellians in self-denial and enthusiasm, we shall be horridly plagued with them. Colonel Lee is the third on the staff ; I forget the second's name. They say all the regiments in Ireland are going to Boston, and fifty thousand Hanoverians coming to guard Ireland—*c'est un furieux remue ménage ;* but I don't understand these things, and wish your Ladyship good night.

1516. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 3, 1775.

In spite of all my modesty, I cannot help thinking I have a little something of the prophet about me. At least we have not conquered America yet. I did not send you immediate word of our victory at Boston, because the success not only seemed very equivocal, but because the conquerors lost three to one more than the vanquished. The last do not pique themselves upon modern good

[1] The lines which follow are very coarse, and as they appear, by the following letter, to have scandalised his fair correspondent, do not illustrate the state of society in 1775, and would certainly shock that of 1848. I have therefore omitted them.—R. Vernon Smith.

breeding, but level only at the officers, of whom they have slain a vast number. We are a little disappointed, indeed, at their fighting at all, which was not in our calculation. We knew we could conquer *America in Germany*, and I doubt had better have gone thither now for that purpose, as it does not appear hitherto to be quite so feasible in America itself. However, we are determined to know the worst, and are sending away all the men and ammunition we can muster. The Congress, not asleep neither, have appointed a Generalissimo, Washington, allowed a very able officer, who distinguished himself in the last war. Well! we had better have gone on robbing the Indies; it was a more lucrative trade.

We are in no pain about the Spanish fleet. Our papers say it has its hands full at Algiers, or Tunis, I forget which. There are so many people who take care of the geography of a war, that I never trouble my head about it. At present I am thinking of nothing but my journey to Paris, whither I am bound on the 15th. It is a little late I own for such a trip, and I did not think I should have so much resolution again; but my dear old blind woman [Madame du Deffand] has begged it, and I cannot refuse, though I feel how terrible the parting will be, since I cannot expect to see her again. She is almost seventy-nine! In fact, her lamp burns as brightly as ever; but I am sure mine grows dim, and my spirits scarcely serve

To rock the cradle of reposing age![1]

Your brother has recovered his activity so far as to go to Linton, where he has not been these four years.

Your friend, the Duchess of Beaufort,[2] has already found a great and proper party for Lady Mary [Somerset]; Lord Granby[3] has proposed, and you may be sure was not rebuffed. We have no other news but the American, which keeps our summer in full talk. Every day proclaims something, but so many lies, that I always wait for the echo; and advise you to do so too, or you will have many abortive beliefs.

The heroine Kingston is almost forgotten. Foote had a mind to have revived her story on the stage; but Lord Hertford [as Lord Chamberlain] would not license his piece.[4] It is still thought she

[1] Pope.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Widow of Lord Noel Somerset, Duke of Beaufort.—WALPOLE.

[3] Grandson and successor of John Manners, Duke of Rutland.—WALPOLE.

[4] It was called a 'Trip to Calais,' and was acted afterwards, but much altered.—WALPOLE.

will be tried and convicted, but her Countess-hood will save her Duchess-hood from being burnt in its hand. Adieu!

1517. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 7, 1775.

Let me tell you you have no more taste than Dr. Kenrick, if you do not like 'Madame de Sevigné's Letters.' Read them again; they are one of the very few books, that, like 'Gray's Life,' improve upon one every time one reads them. You have still less taste, if you like my letters, which have nothing original, and if they have anything good so much the worse, for it can only be from having read her letters and his. He came perfect out of the egg-shell, and wrote as well at eighteen as ever he did; nay, letters better, for his natural humour was in its bloom, and not wrinkled by low spirits, dissatisfaction, or the character he had assumed. I do not care a straw whether Dr. Kenrick and Scotland can persuade England that he was no poet. There is no common sense left in this country:

With Arts and Sciences it travelled West.

The Americans will admire him and you, and they are the only people by whom one would wish to be admired. The world is divided into two nations—men of sense that *will* be free, and fools that like to be slaves. What a figure do two great empires make at this moment! Spain, mistress of Peru and Mexico, amazes Europe with an invincible armada; at last it sails to Algiers, and disbarks its whole contents, even to the provisions of the fleet. It is beaten shamefully, loses all its stores, and has scarce bread left to last till it gets back into its own ports!

Mrs. Britannia orders her senate to proclaim America a continent of cowards, and vote it should be starved unless it will drink tea with her. She sends her only army to be besieged in one of their towns, and half her fleet to besiege the *terra firma;* but orders her army to do nothing, in hopes that the American senate at Philadelphia will be so frightened at the British army being besieged in Boston, that it will sue for peace. At last she gives her army leave to sally out, but being twice defeated, she determines to carry on the war so vigorously till she has not a man left, that all England will be satisfied with the total loss of America; and if everybody is satisfied, who can be blamed? Besides, is not our dignity maintained? have

not we carried our majesty beyond all example? When did you ever read before of a besieged army threatening military execution on the country of the besiegers! *car tel est notre plaisir!* But, alack! we are like the mock Doctor; we have made the heart and the liver change sides; *cela etoit autrefois ainsi, mais nous avons changé tout cela!*

I will certainly visit Monsr. Watelet's garden that he has curled and powdered *à l'Angloise.* I shall like to be amused with less serious follies than our own, though I doubt I shall find they laugh a little more at us than we can at them. Well! I will wrap myself up in my *Robinhood!* They cannot say the good old man my father did it. Have you heard the history of Foote and her Grace of Kingston? She applied to the Lord Chamberlain [Lord Hertford], and prevented the piece being licensed, though Foote had an audience, and with his usual modesty assured her he had not had her Grace in view. The dame, as if he had been a member of Parliament, offered to buy him off. Aristophanes's Grecian virtue was not to be corrupted; but he offered to read the piece, and blot out whatever passages she would mark, that she thought applicable to her case. She was too cunning to bite at this; and they parted. He swears he will not only print his comedy, but act her in Lady Brumpton. He has already printed his letter to Lord Hertford, and not content with that, being asked why it was not licensed, replied, "Why, my Lord Hertford desired me to make his youngest son a box-keeper, and because I would not, he stopped my play." Upon my word, if the stage and the press are not checked, we shall have the army, on its return from Boston, besieged in the Haymarket itself. What are we come to, if Maids of Honour[1] cannot marry two husbands in quiet!

Well, General Gage is recalled, and is to be hanged. We had conquered America by this time, they say, if he had not betrayed us, and desired the provincials to block him up; so *en attendant,* Hancock and Adams, and Putnam and Washington, you may divert yourselves with executing your own General. Voltaire will abuse you, as he did about poor Byng; but really a government must condemn somebody, or the mob—but I am going to Paris, and leave you to your own devices. Don't finish your 'Essay on Gardening' till I bring you the newest improvements from the Opera, where to be sure the Elysian fields will be laid out *naturally.* If anything strikes

[1] Miss Chudleigh was for many years a Maid of Honour to Augusta, Princess of Wales.—CUNNINGHAM.

me particularly, you shall hear from me, but as my stay will be short, I don't promise, for I have been so often at Paris, that my staring is extremely *émoussé*, and one must travel to Abyssinia, to find anything very new. Adieu.

Yours entirely,
H. W.

1518. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 9, 1775.

Well! I am going *tout de bon*, and heartily wish I was returned. It is a horrid exchange, the cleanness and verdure and tranquillity of Strawberry, for a beastly ship, worse inns, the pavé of the roads bordered with eternal rows of maimed trees, and the racket of an *hôtel garni!* I never dote on the months of August and September, enlivened by nothing but Lady Greenwich's speaking-trumpet—but I do not want to be amused—at least never at the expense of being put in motion. Madame du Deffand, I am sure, may be satisfied with the sacrifice I make to her![1]

You have heard, to be sure, of the war between your brother [Lord Hertford] and Foote; but probably not how far the latter has carried his impudence. Being asked, why Lord Hertford had refused to license his piece, he replied, "Why, he asked me to make his youngest son a box-keeper, and because I would not, he stopped my play."[2] The Duchess of Kingston offered to buy it off, but Foote would not take her money, and swears he will act her in Lady Brumpton; which to be sure is very applicable.

I am sorry to hear Lord Villiers is going to drag my lady through all the vile inns in Germany. I think he might go alone.

George Onslow told me yesterday, that the American Congress

[1] In her letter of the 5th of August, Madame du Deffand, by way of inducement to Walpole to make the journey, says—"Je vous jure que je ne me soucierai de rien pour vous; c'est à dire, de vous faire faire une chose plutôt qu'une autre: vous serez totalement libre de toutes vos pensées, paroles, et actions; vous ne me verrez pas un souhait, un désir qui puisse contredire vos pensées et vos volontés: je saurai que M. Walpole est à Paris, il saura que je demeure à St. Joseph; il sera maître d'y arriver, d'y rester, de s'en aller, tout comme il lui plaira."—Wright.

[2] The piece was entitled 'The Trip to Calais,' in which the author having ridiculed, under the name of Kitty Crocodile, the eccentric Duchess of Kingston, she offered him a sum of money to strike out the part. A correspondence took place between the parties, which ended in the Duchess making an application to Lord Hertford, at that time Lord Chamberlain, who interdicted the performance. Foote, however, brought it out, with some alterations, in the following year, under the title of 'The Capucain.—Wright.

had sent terms of accommodation, and that your brother told him so; but a strange fatality attends George's news, which is rarely canonical; and I doubt this intelligence is far from being so. I shall know more to-morrow, when I go to town to prepare for my journey on Tuesday. Pray let me hear from you, enclosed to M. Panchaud.

I accept with great joy Lady Aylesbury's offer of coming hither in October, which will increase my joy in being at home again. I intend to set out on my return the 25th of next month. Sir Gregory Page has left Lord Howe eight thousand pounds at present, and twelve more after his aunt Mrs. Page's death.

Thursday, 10*th*.

I cannot find any grounds for believing that any proposals are come from the Congress. On the contrary, everything looks as melancholy as possible. Adieu!

1519. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 10, 1775.

If I am become mysterious, Madam, I must be grown as old as Methusaleh, or by keeping bad company have contracted habits of circumspection, which I always despised.

Is it mystery not to notify royal pregnancies? Consider how *bourgeois* it would be in me to talk of her Highness my niece; there is the source of my reserve. Oh! but a babe of Brunswick to be born at Rome! what an event! very well, Madam, it will be time enough six months hence to talk of that. For my escape, and the valour of my servant, it is a mystery still to myself. I believe a man did intend to rob me one morning as I went to Hanworth, because when I ordered my footman to produce a blunderbuss that was under the seat of the chaise, the fellow galloped off; but if David is intituled in any part in this history that I have suppressed, it is for being such a fool as to bid the man follow the chaise when he inquired the way. The whole conduct was my own in this no adventure, which I see has swelled to a magnitude. I had forgotten it, and it certainly was not worth relating; so pray your Ladyship, let me be restored to my character of indiscreet in your good opinion, or my neighbour Mr. Ellis will come and trust me with some State secret out of the Utrecht Gazette. I have escaped many such sage friends by not reverencing mystery, to the prejudice

of my preferment, no doubt; but I do not regret my misfortune, though my error is so evident. When Mentor and Sir Richard Lyttelton were lads of fifteen, they were walking in the garden at Hampton Court, with that old driveller Lord Fitzwater. Lyttelton rattled away as usual. As soon as the peer was gone, Master Mentor said to his companion, "Dick, how could you talk so imprudently before a privy councillor!" Could such premature wisdom fail to produce a nurse of future Cæsars? and have not I now proved to your Ladyship that you accuse me unjustly of being too cautious?

Apropos, Telemachus was entertained yesterday at Oatlands; the guests besides were, Lord and Lady Holderness, Lord and Lady Hertford, Fitzroy, George Onslow and his wife. It is pity the first glimpse of empire was such a paradise; he will conclude it is Elysium from thence to the Orkneys.

Methinks I in my turn might complain of reserve. *Only two bobbins of gold for your tambour*, and *I had rather be excused more commissions*. I beg you will honour me with any you please; I will not excuse myself, unless they would involve me in a dispute with a Custom-house officer at Dover, and applications afterwards, which I have not spirit to encounter. I propose being at home the first week in October. Mr. Crawfurd and *his lady* and *family*, the papers say, are set out for Spa. Lord and Lady Villiers are going to Vienna, not terrified by the persecutions which were executed on an unhappy princess who twice took the same journey.

As your Ladyship was scandalised with the verses, though I assure you I gave copies to two Countesses, who desired to have them, I will now transcribe a more serious tale, which I found the other night in Froissart, and which shows how true gallantry is degenerated. He is speaking of Edward III.'s first expedition to France (I wish I could write the black letter). "They had with them Yonge Bachelars, who had eche of them one of their eyen closed with a peace of sylke. It was sayd, how they had made a vowe among the ladyes of their countrey, that they wolde nat se but with one eye tyll they had done some dedes of armes in Fraunce." Is not it plain, Madam, that we were greater heroes when we were in love and hoodwinked, than now that we have no sentiment, and have our eyes broad open?

1520. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Aug. 11, 1775.

Mr. and *Mrs.* Crawfurd are not yet gone. Have you heard that Mrs. St. Jack has declared that if the Colonel goes to America, she will accompany him? G. Selwyn says, she will make an excellent *breast-work*. Adieu, Madam! I wish you much pleasure, shooting, gold cups, judges, and all the joys the country can afford.

1521. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

From t'other side of the water, August 17, 1775.[1]

Interpreting your Ladyship's orders in the most personal sense, as respecting the dangers of the sea, I write the instant I am landed. I did not, in truth, set out till yesterday morning at eight o'clock; but finding the roads, horses, postillions, tides, winds, moons, and Captain Fectors in the pleasantest humour in the world, I embarked almost as soon as I arrived at Dover, and reached Calais before the sun was awake;—and here I am for the sixth time in my life, with only the trifling distance of seven-and-thirty years between my first voyage and the present. Well! I can only say in excuse, that I am got into the land of Strulbrugs, where one is never too old to be young, and where *la béquille du père Barnabas* blossoms like Aaron's rod, or the Glastonbury thorn.

Now, to be sure, I shall be a little mortified, if your Ladyship wanted a letter of news, and did not at all trouble your head about my navigation. However, you will not tell one so; and therefore I will persist in believing that this good news will be received with transport at Park-place, and that the bells of Henley will be set a ringing. The rest of my adventures must be deferred till they have happened, which is not always the case of travels. I send you no compliments from Paris, because I have not got thither, nor delivered the bundle which Mr. Conway sent me. I did, as your Ladyship commanded—buy three pretty little medallions in frames of filigraine, for our dear old friend [Madame du Deffand]. They will

[1] Mr Walpole reached Paris on the 19th of August, and left it on the 12th of October—Wright.

not ruin you, having cost not a guinea and a half; but it was all I could find that was genteel and portable; and as she does not measure by guineas, but attentions, she will be as much pleased as if you had sent her a dozen acres of Park-place. As they are in bas-relief, too, they are feelable, and that is a material circumstance to her. I wish the Diomede had even so much as a pair of Nankin!

Adieu, tout la chère famille! I think of October with much satisfaction; it will double the pleasure of my return.

1522. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Roye, Aug. 18, 1775.

The last paragraph of your letter made me smile, Madam. If Colonel Mars were setting out for America with Jove's own thunderbolt in his portmanteau, Venus could not have encouraged him by a more inspiring epistle, so my glory is to redound to your Ladyship! Alas! I am grieved to the heart that my journey has been hitherto so tranquil and obscure, that, I doubt, not the reflection of a ray will fall to your Ladyship's share. I slipped into Calais with as little *éclat* as a smuggler. No garrison under arms received me, nor commandant conducted me in ceremony to the citadel. In short, the King of France had forgotten to write a postscript in my favour, when he ordered royal honours for my niece; and so, by that neglect, no regard was paid to my avuncular dignity. I was not very sorry, as walking is not one of my excellences; in my best days Mr. Winnington said I tripped like a peewit; and if I do not flatter myself, my march at present is more like a dabchick's.

I arrived at Dover in such a clear blue evening, and saw the French coast so distinctly, that, had I had but a pair of miracle-shoes, I thought I could have gone over on foot in a quarter of an hour; but I am not going to relate my journey, which was written seven-and-thirty years ago, and is in print (*v.* Gray's Letters). Well! I have not lived so long for nothing; I have at least learnt wit enough not to waste six days between Calais and Paris; but, as Mr. Mason says, I was young and giddy, and thought I had time enough and to spare, which is not quite the case at present. I hope my own biographer will give as good a reason for my being here at all; but that is his business, not mine.

1523. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

Paris, Aug. 20, 1775.

I HAVE been sea-sick to death; I have been poisoned by dirt and vermin; I have been stifled by heat, choked by dust, and starved for want of anything I could touch: and yet, Madam, here I am, perfectly well, not in the least fatigued; and, thanks to the rivelled parchments, formerly faces, which I have seen by hundreds, I find myself almost as young as when I came hither first in the last century. In spite of my whims, and delicacy, and laziness, none of my grievances have been mortal: I have borne them as well as if I had set up for a philosopher, like the sages of this town. Indeed, I have found my dear old woman so well, and looking so much better than she did four years ago, that I am transported with pleasure, and thank your Ladyship and Mr. Conway for driving me hither. Madame du Deffand came to me the instant I arrived, and sat by me whilst I stripped and dressed myself; for, as she said, since she cannot see, there was no harm in my being stark.[1] She was charmed with your present; but was so kind as to be so much more charmed with my arrival, that she did not think of it a moment. I sat with her till half an hour after two in the morning, and had a letter from her before my eyes were open again. In short, her soul is immortal, and forces her body to bear it company.

This is the very eve of Madame Clotilde's[2] wedding; but Monsieur Turgot, to the great grief of Lady Mary Coke, will suffer no cost, but one banquet, one ball, and a play at Versailles. Count Viry gives a banquet, a *bal masqué*, and a firework. I think I shall see little but the last, from which I will send your Ladyship a rocket in my next letter. Lady Mary, I believe, has had a private audience of the ambassador's leg,[3] but *en tout bien et honneur*, and only to satisfy her ceremonious curiosity about any part of royal nudity. I am just going to her, as she is at Versailles; and I have not time to add a word more to the vows of your Ladyship's most faithful.

[1] Madame du Deffand had just completed her *seventy-eighth* year.—WRIGHT.

[2] Madame Clotilde, sister of Louis XVI. Turgot was the new minister of finance, who, with his colleagues, were endeavouring, by every practicable means, to reduce the enormous expenditure of the country.—WRIGHT.

[3] He alludes to the ceremony of the marriages of princesses by proxy.—BERRY.

1524. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Paris, Aug. 23.

I SHOULD have a heart of adamant, Madam, if I was not become a perfect Frenchman. Nothing could exceed my reception. I do not talk only of my dear old friend, whose kindness augments with the century. The Marechales de Luxembourg and Mirepoix came to Paris to see me; the Duchesse de la Vallière met me in the outward room and embraced me. I am smeared with red, like my own crest the Saracen, and, in short, have been so kissed on both cheeks, that had they been as large as Madame de Virri's, they would have lost leather; but enough of vanity. I have landed on the moment of pomp and diversion. Madame Clotilde was married on Monday morning, and at night was the banquet *roial*,—the finest sight *sur la terre*,—I believe, for I did not see it. I husband my pleasures and my person, and do not expose my wrinkles *au grand jour*. Last night I did limp to the *Bal Paré*, and as I am the hare with many real friends, was placed on the *banc des ambassadeurs*, just behind the royal family. It was in the theatre, the bravest in the universe; and yet taste predominates over expense. What I have to say, I can tell your Ladyship in a word, for it was impossible to see anything but the Queen! Hebes and Floras, and Helens and Graces, are street-walkers to her. She is a statue of beauty, when standing or sitting; grace itself when she moves. She was dressed in silver, scattered over with laurierroses; few diamonds, and feathers, much lower than the Monument. They say she does not dance in time, but then it is wrong to dance in time. Four years ago I thought her like an English Duchess,[1] whose name I have forgotten *for some years*. Horrible! but the Queen has had the cestus since. The King's likeness to a Duke, whose name is equally out of my books, remains; and as if there was a fatality that chained the two families together, Madame is as like Lady Georgiana as two peas. As your Ladyship and Lord Ossory cannot be so engrossed with gazing on the Queen as I was, you will want to hear more of the Court. I will try what I can remember of it. The new Princess of Piedmont has a glorious face, the rest about the dimensions of the last Lord Holland, which does not do so well in a stiff-bodied gown. Madame Elizabeth

[1] Lady Ossory, formerly Duchess of Grafton.—R. VERNON SMITH.

is pretty and genteel; Mademoiselle a good figure and dances well. As several of the royal family are *drapés* for the Princess of Conti, there were besides, only the King's two brothers, the three elder Mesdames, the Princess de Lamballe, and the Prince of Conde. Monsieur is very handsome; the Comte d'Artois a better figure and better dancer. Their characters approach to those of two other royal dukes.

There were but eight minuets, and, except the Queen and Princesses, only eight lady dancers. I was not so struck with the dancing as I expected, except with a *pas de deux* by the Marquis de Noailles and Madame Holstein. For beauty, I saw none, or the Queen effaced all the rest. After the minuets were French country dances, much encumbered by the long trains, longer tresses, and hoops. As the weather was excessively sultry, I do not think the clothes, though of gauze and the lightest silks, had much taste. In the intervals of dancing, baskets of peaches, China oranges (a little out of season), biscuits, ices, and wine and water, were presented to the royal family and dancers. The ball lasted but just two hours. The Monarch did not dance, but for the first two rounds of the minuets even the Queen does not turn her back to him; yet her behaviour is as easy as divine. To-night is a banquet for three hundred persons, given by the Count de Virri, and on Friday he gives a *bal masqué* to the universe in a Colisée erected on purpose. I have excused myself from the first, as I have no curiosity to see how three hundred persons eat, but shall go for a moment to the other *fête*, as nothing but dominos are used, except the grand habit for the dancers. On Saturday is to be acted, in the same great theatre at Versailles, the 'Connêtable de Bourbon,' a new piece by Monsieur Guibert (author of the 'Tactique),' graciously indulged to the Queen, and not to be profaned but there and at Fontainebleau, *car cela derogeroit;* and, besides, his father is a *vieux militaire*, who would not condescend to hear his son's play read, even to the Queen! The Prince de Beauvau is to place me, and there end the spectacles, for Monsieur Turgot is *œconome*.

I am rejoiced, for the heat was so great last night, and I traversed so many corridors, that I would not have so much pleasure often for all the world. Thus, Madam, I have given your Ladyship a full account of my travels in this my second life; and you are relieved by my letters from England. I cannot help telling you the French are a little amazed at our sacrificing the substance of America to the sovereignty, for they grow as English in their ideas as we grow

French. Well, I will go read our papers, that I may be able to dispute with them.

1525. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Paris, Sept. 6, 1775.

I HAVE made very little progress yet towards the account I am to give you of the propagation of the faith in this kingdom. But stay, this is a little too metaphoric; and lest I should be taken for an ex-jesuit or a spy, I declare, like the writer of an Opera, that I neither believe in the gods of old Rome nor new, excepting Vertumnus, Flora, and Pomona, and that I am going to write to you my Provincial, on the conversion of the French to English gardening. I have begun my observation as methodically as if I was to draw up an article for the Encyclopedia. I have laid the axe to the root of the tree, for I have begun by visiting M. Watelet's Isle, called *le Moulin Joli*. If he has laid the axe to the root, and even to the branches, he has used it nowhere else. Instead of finding, as I expected, a windmill made of ivory and inlaid with false stones; instead of Dryads and Hamadryads gathering acorns in baskets of gauze, M. Watelet has jumped back into Nature, when she was not above five hundred years old: in one word, his *Island* differs in nothing from a French garden into which no mortal has set his foot for the last century. It is an *ate* (I don't know whether I spell well) joined to his *terra firma* by two bridges, one of which he calls Dutch and the other Chinese, and which are as unlike either as two peas, and which is pierced and divided into straight narrow walks (*en berceau*) and surrounded by a rude path quite round. To give this *étoile*, an air *champêtre*, a plenary indulgence has been granted to every nettle, thistle, and bramble *that grew in the garden*, "*and they seem good in his sight.*" The receipt is as follows,—take an *ate* full of willows, cram it full of small elms and poplar pines, strip them into cradles, and cut them into paths, and leave all the rest as rough as you found it, and you will have a *Moulin Joli*.

You must know this effort of genius is the more provoking, as the situation is charming. Besides that the isle is in the middle of the Seine, every peephole (though so small that you seem to look through the diminishing end of a spying-glass, besides terminating on one real windmill) is bounded by a chateau, a clocher, a village, a convent, a villa where Henrietta Maria was educated, or hermitage to which Bossuet retired,—not to mortify himself, but

Fenelon. It is true, you catch these points of view over wide fields of chalk, which would produce frankincense as soon as grass, and which (if they had symptoms of verdure) were waving ranks of fennel, I always perceive here, when I am out of Paris; but I never can think myself in the country. I shall next week see some more English Essays.

But they are imitating us in better things: their King is of an excellent disposition, he has driven away the Chancellor, the Duc d'Aiguillon, and those wretches who had given perfection to despotism in the last reign. M. de Maurepas restored the old Parliament, and M. Turgot, the Comptroller General, has destroyed corvées, that most execrable oppression, and is every day planning and attempting acts for public happiness. The Éloges of the Academy roll on maxims of virtue and patriotism, and the King publicly applauds them. You may judge whether they do not stare at all we are doing! They will not believe me when I tell them that the American war is *fashionable,* for one is forced to use that word to convey to them an idea of the majority. A great lady asked me the other day, if I was not a Bostonian? and I have not met with a single Frenchman who does not express indignation or sneer contempt at all our late Acts of Parliament. M. de Castries being told that Lord North has the Garter, was surprised and said for what? for having lost America! —Upon these subjects, as I have not a vast deal to say on behalf of my dear country, I choose to shift the conversation to her Grace of Kingston, whose history seems as strange to them as our politics. What a chef-d'œuvre is Foote's answer!

September 10.

Chap. II.

On Anglo-Franco gardens,

which by the bye they call Anglo-Chinois gardens, as they say, that by the help of Sir William Chambers's lunettes they have detected us for having stolen our gardens from the Chinese. I shall tell them another tale when I publish my last volume. Yesterday I went to see the Countess de Boufflers' English garden at Auteuil, and it is strictly English, and begotten by her on an English gardener. There are fifty-two acres, which ascend from the house up a hill that is laid out in fields, with a sunk fence and loose trees and shrubs, and has tolerable turf, except that it is coarse and of a green seldom worn by a gentleman's garden in England. All along the summit reigns a

noble terrace, surrounded by the Bois de Boulogne, into which a grille opens upon a lofty avenue bounded by a sugar-loaf hill. The terrace looks over the lawn upon a glorious prospect, which begins from the left with one of the King's houses, is joined by a wood out of which juts Passy, the Duc de Penthiévre's, that forms the side-scene and flings a rich view of hills and towns to a great distance. The middle of the landscape advances again; on the foreground are villages and villas, over which is extended all Paris, with the horizon broken by the towers and domes of Notre Dame, St. Sulpice, the Invalides, the Val de Grace, &c.; the whole height of the semicircle goes off in hills decked with villages and country-houses that are closed by Meudon, and forests on higher hills. In this sumptuous prospect nothing is wanting but verdure and water, of which you do not see a drop. In short, they can never have as beautiful landscapes as ours, till they have as bad a climate.

I think I shall stay here a month longer. If you send me a line, direct it to Arlington; it will be conveyed or kept for me,

Yours ever,

H. W.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR, *Aston, Oct.* 22, 1775.

MY newspaper has this day announced your arrival; I will not therefore defer a moment to answer your most agreeable letter from Paris, of the 6th of last month, which I should have answered immediately after I received it, had there been a chance of its reaching you while in France, but I got it late, being absent on a visit in Staffordshire. All this, however, is idle apology: let me hasten to inquire how you do after your tour, and that before the meeting of Parliament, when nobody will be well, either those in Parliament or out (if I have the gift of prophecy), except peradventure the new-made lords, who will choose to be in good spirits till the novelty of their nobility ceases. But as for me, *il faut cultiver mon jardin*, and therefore I'll only talk to you at present on the theme of your last letter, and tell you that I am as well acquainted now with M. Watelet's *moulin joli*, as if I had seen it with my own eyes: such are your descriptive powers, when you please to make use of them: not that I wish you often to make use of them on such a subject; and yet to describe bad taste well, requires as much the powers of a master as to describe good, and the description is perhaps full as useful, always more entertaining; once more, therefore, I thank you for the treat you have given me.

I have nothing to send you in return, except a story which I picked up the other day from a country squire, who had the honour to dine with her Grace of Kingston, at Grantham, in her way from Thoresby to town. She was attended by three elderly personages dressed in black, one of which he found was her Lawyer, the second her Chaplain, and the third a German Physician, by name Dr. Falke. After dinner her Grace retired, and the Lawyer began a very high encomium on her understanding, of which he gave many specimens in his own way, relative to her late manœuvres in the courts of law. The Squire heard him with attention, and when he had finished his panegyric replied very bluntly, "Mr. Lawyer, this may be all very true; I believe the Duchess is a very clever sort of a woman, but by G— she never was so much out in her life as when she ventured to write a letter to Foote." The lawyer owned she had better have let that alone, upon which Dr. Falke got up, ran to the Squire, and taking

1526. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Paris, Sept. 7, 1775.

Your letter of Aug. 12th followed me hither from England. I can answer it from hence with less reserve than I should at home. I understand very well, my dear sir, the propriety of the style in which you write in your ministerial capacity, and never wish to have you expose yourself to any inconvenience by unnecessary frankness. I am too much convinced of your heart and head not swerving from the glorious principles in which we were both educated, to suspect you of having adopted the principles instilled into so many Englishmen by Scotch Jacobites, the authors of the present, as they have been of every, civil war,—since the days of Queen Elizabeth. You will on your side not be surprised that I am what I always was, a zealot for liberty in every part of the globe, and consequently that I most heartily wish success to the Americans. They have hitherto not made *one* blunder; and the Administration have made a thousand, besides the two capital ones, of first provoking, and then of uniting the Colonies. The latter seem to have as good heads as hearts, as we want both. The campaign seems languishing. The Ministers will make all their efforts against the spring. So no doubt will the Americans too. Probably the war will be long. On the side of England, it must be attended with ruin. If England prevails, English and American liberty is at an end! If the Colonies prevail, our commerce is gone—and if, at last, we negotiate, they will neither forgive nor give us our former advantages.

The country, where I now am, is, luckily, neither in a condition or disposition to meddle. If it did, it would complete our destruction, even by only assisting the Colonies, which I can scarce think they are

him by the button, said, in very broken English, "O sire, me give you letel piece of advice; pray no mention such matter to her Grace, her Grace no bear to hear of it."

This story I think carries its own marks of authenticity about it. I will not answer for another he told, which was, that when she was in deep mourning, she ate black puddings, and drank black cherry brandy, not being able to bear to eat or drink anything of a gayer colour. This latter I only give you as ben trovato. I agree with you in thinking Foote's answer one of the very best things in the English language, and prefer it in its kind; Mr. Pope's letter to Lord Hervey is nothing to it.

This letter being only to ask you how you do after your voyage, and having nothing to say about myself worth your hearing, ought to conclude soon, and perhaps the sooner the better; it shall not, however, conclude without expressing how very much, and how sincerely I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful servant,

W. Mason.

blind enough not to do. They openly talk of our tyranny and folly with horror and contempt, and perhaps with amazement, and so does almost every foreign Minister here, as well as every Frenchman. Instead of being mortified, as I generally am when my country is depreciated, I am comforted by finding that, though but one of very few in England, the sentiments of the rest of the world concur with and confirm mine. The people with us are fascinated; and what must we be, when Frenchmen are shocked at our despotic acts! Indeed, both this nation and their King seem to embrace the most generous principles—the only fashion, I doubt, in which we shall not imitate them! Too late, our eyes will open!

The Duke and Duchess [of Gloucester] are at Venice. Nothing ever exceeded the distinctions paid to them in this country. The King even invited them to Paris; but the Duke's haste to be more southerly before the bad weather begins, would not permit him to accept of that honour. They do not expect the same kindness everywhere—and for the English, they have even let the French see what slaves they are, by not paying their duty to the Duke and Duchess. I have written to her, without naming you, to dissuade their fixing at Rome—I fear, in vain. I proposed Sienna to them, as I flatter myself the Emperor's goodness for the Duke would dispose the Great Duke to make it agreeable to them; and their residence there would not commit *you*. Indeed, I do not believe you suspect me of sacrificing you to the interests of my family. On the other hand, I wish you, for your own sake, to take any opportunities of paying your court to them indirectly. They are both warm and hurt at the indignities they have received. In our present distracted situation, it is more than possible that the Duke may be a very important personage. I know well that you have had full reason to be dissatisfied with him; I remember it as much as you can: but you are too prudent, as well as too good-natured, not to forgive a young prince. I own I am in pain about the Duchess. She has all the good qualities of her father [Sir Edward Walpole], but all his impetuosity; and is much too apt to resent affronts, though her virtue and good-nature make her as easily reconciled; but her first movements are not discreet. I wish you to please her as much as possible, within your instructions. She has admirable sense, when her passions do not predominate. In one word, her marriage has given me many a pang; and though I never gave into it, I endeavour by every gentle method to prevent her making her situation still worse; and, above all things, I try never to inflame. It is all I can do where

I have no ascendant, which, with a good deal of spirit of my own, I cannot expect: however, as I perfectly understand both my parties and myself, I manage pretty well. I know when to stoop, and when to stop; and when I will stoop or will not. I should not be so pliant if they were where they ought to be.

That heroine of Doctors' Commons, about whom you inquire, the Duchess of Kingston, has at last made her folly, which I have long known, as public as her shame, by entering the lists with a Merry-Andrew, but who is no fool. Foote was bringing her on the stage: Lord Hertford [as Lord Chamberlain] prohibited his piece. Drunk with triumph, she would give the mortal blow with her own hand,—

"Pallas te hoc vulnere Pallas immolat;"

but, as the instrument she chose was a *goose*-quill, the stroke recoiled on herself. She wrote a letter in the 'Evening Post,' which not the lowest of her class, who tramp in pattens, would have set her mark to. Billingsgate from a ducal coronet was inviting: however, Foote, with all the delicacy she ought to have used, replied only with wit, irony, and confounded satire. The Pope will not be able to wash out the spots with all the holy water in the Tiber. I imagine she will escape a trial; but Foote has given her the *coup de grace*.

Lord Chatham, when I left England, was in a very low, languishing way; his constitution, I believe, too much exhausted to throw out the gout; and then it falls on his spirits. The last letters speak of his case as not desperate. He might, if allowed—and it was practicable—do much good still. Who else can, I know not. The Opposition is weak every way. They have better hearts than the Ministers, fewer good heads; not that I am in admiration of the latter. Times may produce men. We must trust to the book of events, if we will flatter ourselves. Make no answer to this; only say you received my letter from Paris, and direct to England. I may stay here a month longer; but it is uncertain.

11*th.*

P.S. I had made up my letter; but those I received from England last night bring such important intelligence, I must add a paragraph. That miracle of gratitude, the Czarina, has consented to lend England twenty thousand Russians, to be transported to America. The Parliament is to meet on the 20th of next month, and vote twenty-six thousand seamen! What a paragraph of blood is there! With what torrents must liberty be preserved in America! In England,

what can save it? Oh! mad, mad England! What frenzy, to throw away its treasures, lay waste its empire of wealth, and sacrifice its freedom, that its prince may be the arbitrary lord of boundless deserts in America, and of an impoverished, depopulated, and thence insignificant, island in Europe! and what prospect of comfort has a true Englishman? Why, that Philip II. miscarried against the boors of Holland, and that Louis XIV. could not replace James II. on the throne!

1527. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, Sept. 8, 1775.

The delays of the post, and its departure before its arrival, saved me some days of anxiety for Lady Aylesbury, and prevented my telling you how concerned I am for her accident; though I trust, by this time, she has not even pain left. I feel the horror you must have felt during her suffering in the dark, and on the sight of her arm;[1] and though nobody admires her needlework more than I, still I am rejoiced that it will be the greatest sufferer. However, I am very impatient for a further account. Madame du Deffand, who, you know, never loves her friends by halves, and whose impatience never allows itself time to inform itself, was out of her wits, because I could not explain exactly how the accident happened, and where. She wanted to write directly, though the post was just gone; and, as soon as I could make her easy about the accident, she fell into a new distress about her fans for Madame de Marchais, and concludes they have been overturned, and broken too. In short, I never saw anything like her. She has made engagements for me till Monday se'nnight, in which are included I don't know how many journeys into the country; and as nobody ever leaves her without engaging them for another time, all these parties will be so many polypuses, that will shoot out into new ones every way. Madame de Jonsac,[2] a great friend of mine, arrived the day before yesterday, and Madame du Deffand has pinned her down to meeting me at her house four times before next Tuesday, all parentheses, that are not to interfere with our other suppers; and from those suppers I never get to bed

[1] Lady Aylesbury had been overturned in her carriage at Park-place, and dislocated her wrist.—Walpole.

[2] La Comtesse de Jonsac, sister of the President Henault.—Wright.

before two or three o'clock. In short, I need have the activity of a squirrel, and the strength of a Hercules, to go through my labours—not to count how many *démêlés* I have had to *raccommode*, and how many *mémoires* to present against Tonton,[1] who grows the greater favourite the more people he devours. As I am the only person who dare correct him, I have already insisted on his being confined in the Bastile every day after five o'clock. T'other night he flew at Lady Barrymore's face, and I thought would have torn her eye out; but it ended in biting her finger. She was terrified; she fell into tears. Madame du Deffand, who has too much parts not to see everything in its true light, perceiving that she had not beaten Tonton half enough, immediately told us a story of a lady, whose dog, having bitten a piece out of a gentleman's leg, the tender dame, in a great fright, cried out, "Won't it make my dog sick?"

Lady Barrymore[2] has taken a house. She will be glutted with conquests: I never saw anybody so much admired. I doubt her poor little head will be quite overset.

Madame de Marchais[3] is charming: eloquence and attention itself. I cannot stir for peaches, nectarines, grapes, and bury pears. You would think Pomona was in love with me. I am not so transported with N * * * * cock and hen. They are a tabor and pipe that I do not understand. He mouths and she squeaks, and neither articulates. M. d'Entragues I have not seen. Upon the whole I am much more pleased with Paris than ever I was; and perhaps shall stay a little longer than I intended. The Harry Grenvilles[4] are arrived. I dined with them at Madame de Viry's,[5] who has completed the conquest of France by her behaviour on Madame Clotilde's wedding, and by the fêtes she gave. Of other English I wot not, but grieve the Richmonds do not come.

I am charmed with Dr. Bally; nay, and with the King of Prussia—as much as I can be with a northern monarch. For your Kragen, I think we ought to procure a female one, and marry it to Ireland, that we may breed some new islands against we have lost America.

[1] A faxourite dog of Madame du Deffand's.—WALPOLE.

[2] Lady Emily Stanhope, third daughter of William, second Earl of Harrington, and wife of Richard, sixth Earl of Barrymore, who, dying in 1780, left issue Richard and Augustus Henry, each of whom became, successively, Earl of Barrymore.—WRIGHT.

[3] Madame de Marchais, née Laborde, married to a valet-de-chambre of Louis XVI. From her intimacy with M. d'Angivillier, Directeur des Bâtimens, Jardins, &c., du Roi, she had the opportunity of obtaining the finest fruits and flowers.—WRIGHT.

[4] Henry Grenville, brother to Earl Temple, and his wife, formerly Peggy Banks. See vol. ii. p. 14, and p. 205.—CUNNINGHAM.

[5] Miss Harriet Speed. See vol. iii. p. 462.—CUNNINGHAM.

I know nothing of said America. There is not a Frenchman that does not think us distracted.

I used to scold you about your bad writing, and perceive I have written in such a hurry, and blotted my letter so much, that you will not be able to read it: but consider how few moments I have to myself. I am forced to stuff my ears with cotton to get any sleep.—However, my journey has done me good. I have thrown off at least fifteen years. Here is a letter for my dear Mrs. Damer from Madame de Cambis, who thinks she dotes on you all. Adieu!

P.S. I shall bring you two éloges of Marshal Catinat; not because I admire them, but because I admire him, because I think him very like you.

1528. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Paris, Sept. 12, 1775.

So they say it was I, Madam, who made your Ladyship entertain a passion for Lord Ossory! Upon my word, I never suspected before that I was the god of love! nor can I now discover any resemblance between us, unless Le Sage was right when he made the devil *upon two sticks* acknowledge himself for Cupid.

However, as the deed was a good one, and made two persons happier than Venus's son generally does, I am well content to take it upon myself: yet not proposing to be so *convenient* again, I will resign Asmodeo's hop to anybody that likes the profession.

What was in the letter that diverted Lord Ossory, I remember no more than the man in the moon, whose memory lasts but a month. I know, though you are so overbenign to them, Madam, that I grow easier about my letters; since they have become so numerous, they must have the fate of a collection that was found last winter at Monsieur de Pondeveylle's: there were sixteen thousand from one lady, in a correspondence of only eleven years.

For fear of setting the house on fire if thrown into the chimney, the executors crammed them into the oven. There have been known here persons who wrote to one another four times a-day; and I was told of one couple, who being always together, and the lover being fond of writing, he placed a screen between them, and then wrote to Madame on t'other side, and flung them over.

You perceive I had not received your Ladyship's when I sent one

away yesterday, nor knew you had been dancing a dream with the Duke of Monmouth, who, when he lost his head, never dreamt you would replace it with his cousin's, whose head I am sure I never recommended or commended to anybody.

1529. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Sept. 16 [1775].

I was interrupted, Madam, t'other day, and have not had a moment since to finish my answer, for, as I never come home till morning, I do not rise till evening. Mr. Crawfurd is arrived, *though* he did promise to come—to make amends, he has not kept one engagement since. On his way, he went to visit the Chatelets, but in a province where they do not live; he has changed his lodgings already, and does not like that which he has got. When he came to Brussels, Sir Something Gordon, our Minister, had just shot out both eyes of the Duc d'Aremberg's son, but letters since say he will recover one of them.

Pray assure the Duchess of Marlborough, Madam, that I am much flattered by her Grace's invitation, and shall certainly obey it. I shall not have an opportunity quite so soon as I intended, having promised to stay here till the 10th of next month—a promise I already repent, as the weather, with English inconstancy, has changed at once from sultry to extreme cold and deluges of rain.

The charming Queen is gone out of fashion, so I am no longer in love with her. However, as I have not seen another face that is handsomer than a mermaid's at the stern of a ship, my heart is still vacant—in France; and you may have it again, Madam, if you are not still dreaming of the Duke of Monmouth, or any of King Charles's breed. If you saw how like this King is to one of them, and what horrid grimaces he makes, I am sure *all my power of description* would not reconcile you to him. Monsieur is very handsome—but somehow or other, I doubt, nobody will fall in love with him. The Comte d'Artois is not so comely, is better made, and having revived the House of Bourbon, is taking true pains to reconcile the ladies to the family. The Duke of Orleans, as they have no longer occasion for his being king, is in a bad way. Madame de Boufflers told us *at supper* t'other night *qu'à sa garderobe il s'étoit passé de la graisse*. I never heard of such a complaint before, and was very glad it was

the only one that poor Crawfurd, who was present, cannot fancy he has.

Lady Anne's comparison of her father to Maitre Corbeau put me in mind of a very good story, though so old I fear you know it, of a little girl who had confounded her prayers and La Fontaine, and being ordered to repeat the Lord's Prayer in French, began, "*Notre père sur un arbre perché.*" If this is antiquated, I have nothing else newer—except that I am violently tempted to stay for Mariette's sale, which they say is to be in November. I have not heard a syllable of news from England since I came hither, my few correspondents being in the country, like your Ladyship.

Thank my stars, you cannot commend this letter, Madam: I hope it is dull enough to pass with impunity. I should have a fine time of it if I tortured myself to keep up a character! but nobody shall ever catch me at that.

21*st.*

Lord Duncannon is not gone! my letter has lain by till it is mouldy, but as I have an opportunity of sending it to-morrow, and no time to write another, it must go, superannuated as it is!

1530. TO GEORGE SELWYN, ESQ.

Paris, Sept. 16, 1775.

Mr. Broderick brought me your letter yesterday, and I told him, as you may be sure, how glad I shall be to be of any use to him. I shall be of little, I believe, as his object is to see things, not persons.

Madame du Deffand would have been more pleased with your message, which I delivered immediately, if she had had greater faith in it: yet, when Crawfurd and I come so often, how can she doubt her power of attraction? If possible, she is more worth visiting than ever: so far am I from being ashamed of coming hither at my age, that I look on myself as wiser than one of the Magi, when I travel to adore this star in the East. The star and I went to the Opera last night, and when we came from Madame de la Vallière's, at one in the morning, it wanted to drive about the town, because it was too early to *set*. To be sure, you and I have dedicated our decline to very different occupations. You nurse a little girl of four years old, and I rake with an old woman of fourscore! *N'importe;*

we know many sages that take great pains to pass their time with less satisfaction.

We have both one capital mortification; have not you? That a great-grand-daughter of Madame de Sevigné pretends, for it is not certain, that she has been debauched by ancient Richelieu,[1] and half the world thinks that she is more guilty of forgery. The memoirs of the two parties are half as voluminous as those of Monsieur du Guines, and more are to appear.

You shall have some royal prints. New fashions in dress, furniture, baubles, I have seen none. Feathers are waning, and almost confined to *filles* and foreigners. I found out an English woman at the Opera last night by her being covered with plumes and no rouge; so well our countrywomen contrive to display their virtue!

I do not tell you about Mons. Turgot's regulations and reformations, because you care no more about their *patrie* than your own; but you shall hear a *bon-mot* of Madame du Deffand. Mons. Turgot has begun several reforms and retracted them: she said, "*Dans le bon vieux tems on reculoit pour mieux sauter, au lieu que Mons. Turgot saute pour mieux reculer.*"

Of the house of Harrington I know as much as you do. Lady Barrymore is here, and my Lord and Lady Harriet[2] are coming: the first is excessively admired. Lady Mary Coke, Henry Grenville and his wife [Peggy Banks], Crawfurd, Lord Coleraine,[3] and Lord Duncannon, are here: the latter will carry this letter. There are many other English; but I did not come hither to get acquaintance of that sort. Madame du Deffand has filled up her vacancies, and given me enough new French. With one of them you would be delighted, a Madame de Marchais. She is not perfectly young, has a face like a Jew pedlar, her person is about four feet, her head about six, and her *coiffure* about ten. Her forehead, chin, and neck are whiter than a miller's; and she wears more festoons of natural flowers than all the *figurantes* at the Opera. Her eloquence is still more abundant, her *attentions* exuberant. She talks volumes, writes folios—I mean in *billets;* presides over the *Académie,* inspires passions, and has not time enough to heal a quarter of the wounds she

[1] The Marshal Duc de Richelieu, so celebrated for his wit, his gallantries, and military talents, was at this period in his eightieth year. He died in August, 1788, at the age of ninety-two.—Jesse.

[2] Henrietta Stanhope, fourth daughter of Lord Harrington, married, in March 1776, Thomas, fourth Lord Foley. She died in 1781.—Cunningham.

[3] John Hanger, second Lord Coleraine in Ireland, died 20th November, 1794.—Cunningham.

gives. She has a house in a nut-shell, that is fuller of invention than a fairy tale; her bed stands in the middle of the room, because there is no other space that would hold it; it is surrounded by such a perspective of looking-glasses, that you may see all that passes in it from the first ante-chamber. But you will see her if you come in spring, which you will not do unless you bring Mie Mie and Raton, and one or two of Lord Carlisle's children; and that you will be afraid of doing, for Madame du Deffand has got a favourite dog [Tonton] that will bite all their noses off, and was very near tearing out one of Lady Barrymore's eyes the other night. Adieu! I shall see you by the middle of October the 21st.

Yours, &c.

P.S. Duncannon is not gone, but I can send my letter to-morrow, and shall.

1531. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Avez-vous lu les deux Eloges? Ah! mon Dieu, le petit Cossé est mort; c'est une desolation! Monsieur de Clermont qui vient de perdre sa femme!—eh bien, Madame! et Monsieur Chamboneau qui doit reprendre la sienne—mais c'est affreux. Apropos, on dit qu'on vient de nommer deux dames à Madame Elizabeth! si je le sçais! bon; ne voila-t-il pas que je viens de me faire écrire chez Madame de Roncherolles! soupez-vous par hazard chez Madame de la Reinière!

This is the quintessence, Madam, of the present state of Paris, Sept. 9th, 1775, a quarter before twelve in the forenoon; and if you receive my letter within a week, you may boast of having the freshest and most fashionable intelligence of what was said last night at half-an-hour after eight in one of the first houses in this capital: not that your Ladyship has much claim on my punctuality: I have been here three weeks this blessed day, and you have taken no more notice of me than if I was in Siberia, and were gone out of fashion instead of in. Remember I am out of your jurisdiction, Madam; and that *mon cœur* is assailed like *Cithère assiégée*, the subject of the present Opera. Lord! how I could brag if I would! Madame de B. told me last night that I had made the *conquête* of her daughter-in-law, la Comtesse Emilie; I am going to drink tea with her under a *bosquet de plumes* this evening, in the mother's English garden at Auteuil, and I am to sup at St. Ouen with Madame Necker, who is

reckoned to have condescended more towards me than to any *bel esprit* or *philosophe* since the days of David Hume. It is true I have hurt myself by speaking a little irreverently of Monsieur Thomas, and by laughing when she told me that Bossuet and the writers under Louis Quatorze had only opened the channels of eloquence which the authors of the present age have made into a perfect bason—but I am always kicking down the pail of my fortune by some indiscretion or other! Well! they are a charming people, and I cannot think of leaving them yet. In England I fancied I was within a furlong of threescore; but it is so English to grow old! The French are Strulbrugs improved. After ninety they have no more caducity or distempers, but set out on a new career. Madame du Deffand and I set out last Sunday at seven in the evening, to go fifteen miles to a ball, and came back after supper; and another night, because it was but one in the morning when she brought me home, she ordered the coachman to make the tour of the Quais, and drive gently because it was so early.

Do you think, Madam, I will come home and have the gout, when I feel myself as young as Nestor when he had just tapped his second century? These good folks push the delusion of life to the last moment. A gentleman here was dying; his wife sent for the notary to make his Will; and when it was done, lest the poor man should have a codicil more of affection to make, they supped by his bedside. The notary, *tout plein d'attentions*, filled a bumper and said, "*Madame, à la santé de notre aimable agonizant.*"

Pray tell Lord Ossory, Madam, that he would not know Paris, it is so improved in buildings and in good architecture. The Hôtel de la Monnoie on the Quai is very handsome. The École Militaire would be beautiful if the columns were not as short as they are long. I have not yet had time to see the École de Chirurgie, which they say is beautiful, nor the Portail de St. Geneviève, nor the Hôtel du Chatelet, nor the Petite Maison of the Princess of Monaco, but shall next week. There are twenty new streets that are lovely, with arcades and gardens. Mad. de Mirepoix's house, where I supped last night, is charming. It is on the old Boulevard, the trees of which shade the windows, with the perspective of a street in front. The *salle-à-manger* is all of stucco, highly polished, representing white marble, with panels of *verd antique*. The grand cabinet is round, all white and gold and glasses, with curtains in festoons of silk *flambé*, and illuminated by four branches of lilies of or-molu, each as loose and graceful as that which Guido's angel holds in the

Salutation at the Carmelites, which, alas! they have just re-painted, as they are serving the whole cloister at the Chartreuse. While we were at supper, with all the windows open, and *les Gardes du Roi* playing to us, your Ladyship, I suppose, was hovering over a fire. It has been sultry ever since I came hither; the last five days like the torrid zone, and lightning as cheap as gunpowder.

We are expecting Mr. Crawfurd; pray don't send for him to Parliament. In England I conclude you are still talking of Mrs. Rudd and Miss Butterfield, and of the Duchess of Rudd and Butterfield. Well, you may tell me what news you have; I will pretend to care about it, as one does about *les nouvelles de province.* I am very insolent, Madam, but at bottom there is a little resentment at not having heard from you.

1532. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Paris, Oct. 3, 1775.

You may be cutting down palm-branches, Madam, to strew the way, for I am coming. The tempter took me up into a mountain, and showed me all Mariette's collection of prints and drawings, which are to be sold in November, and offered me my choice of them if I would stay. I resisted, and prefer myself infinitely to Scipio: he might have had fifty other women; but where is there another room full of Raphaels, Correggios, Parmegianos, and Michael Angelos? Besides, virtue was the *bon-ton* in all the *ruelles* in Rome, and it was not *sçavoir vivre* to feel like a man: my continence is unique; who else curbs any passion or withstands any temptation? Did not three monarchs jump at Poland the moment the devil gave them a glimpse of it? Did I learn self-denial *chez nous?* but I will be just, and own that perhaps I have been infected here. *C'est le règne de la vertu;* and I am flying, lest I should be thought Frenchified, if I return with any principles. Messieurs de Turgot and Malesherbes are every day framing plans for mitigating monarchy and relieving the people; and the King not only listens to but encourages them. Their *philosophes* tell folks that the age is enlightened; but don't repeat this, Madam; I should be laughed at in England, where we are wiser, and have adopted all the notions which the French are so silly as to relinquish.

However, things do not seem fixed here; there are two parties, if either of which prevailed, Dame Vertu would return to her rags.

The charming Queen is eager to reinstate Mons. de Choiseul, and then Madame Gloire would blaze out in full *éclat*. If Monsieur and Madame (the latter a very artful Italian) get the ascendant, then the Princess de Marsan (Monsieur's governess) would bring back the Jesuits, persecution, the Church, and the devil knows what—everything but a Madame du Barri, who must wait for the reign of the Comte d'Artois, till when there will be no naughty doings in this country.

I am going to-night to the Italian comedy with Madame de Mirepoix, to see a new piece, called *La Reduction de Paris*. I have no idea what it is to be, but shall have time to tell you before I finish my letter. My dear old woman has been dangerously ill, which has confined me above ten days. I carried her yesterday to the new Boulevard to take the air for the first time, and with much difficulty have persuaded her not to sup in the country to-night.

Poor Mr. Crawfurd is laid up with the gout, but will not be so long, for in spite of all my wisdom he has sent for a fashionable empiric, who has clapped a plaster to his foot and removed the pain in one night. He consulted an old Duc de Brancas, who was a cripple, and assured him he could already dance a minuet. As I do not want to dance one, I shall not have recourse to the quack, though he should not kill Crawfurd. In truth he is, and always will be, so unhappy a being, that if I did not love him as much as I do, I should scarce think it kind to dissuade him from anything; but he has so much real worth, and so much good sense, that I preach to him by the hour, though I expect no fruit from my sermons. Madame du Deffand says, one can be but what one is born: a great affront to me, who pretend to have improved myself exceedingly. She obeys her thesis so well, that she still says and does everything that comes into her head; and though I have lectured her black and blue about whispering to me in company, it is but two nights ago that she whispered the Bishop of Mirepoix, thinking it was I that sat next to her, about a lady in company, who was sitting over against her, and saw the mistake. You will not believe it perhaps, Madam, but here I am thought a miracle of prudence and discretion. Yes, you will; for I recollect your Ladyship sometimes upbraids me with those qualities. If I have them, I am sure I am not what I was born; but evil communication corrects *bad* manners.

Now I am quoting holy writ, I will tell you a story from Madame du Deffand. A worthy old gentleman who was ill, made his foot-

man read the Bible to him. Unluckily the man could not read, at least not well. The first sentence he uttered was, "*Dieu apparut à Abimelech en singe.*"—"*Comment donc, Butord! que lis tu là?*"—"*Mais, Monsieur, je dis que Dieu apparut à Abimelech en singe.*"—"*Dieu apparut en singe!*"—"*Eh bien! Oui, Monsieur, est-ce que Dieu ne peut pas prendre telle forme qu'il lui plait?*" Pray, Madam, make Lady Anne observe, how true piety drew edification from the mouth of the poor footman.

I have another very moral tale for Lady Anne, but it is too long for a letter. I hope to find her in danger of a brother. You know I am so angry at her sister, that I don't even know her name, and regard her as a footman did here, who being sent to inquire after a lady that was brought to bed, and being asked at his return what the child was, said, "*Je ne sçais pas; je sçais que ce n'est pas un garçon.*"

P.S. Huge news!—yet not quite ripe. Monsieur de Choiseul is come suddenly to Paris. They say he goes back on Saturday, but his friends look in great spirits; and as the Queen has lately committed some acts of authority, and as Madame de Marsan has retired without a pension, the family-compact—but perhaps your Ladyship had rather hear about *La Reduction de Paris*. It is a comic opera, and yet as dismal as 'George Barnwell.' Henry IV. does nothing but utter maxims and sentences: in the first scene arrives a dame with a helmet on, a spear and shield, and one leg bare. I concluded it was Joan of Arc, but it proved to be a Dame de Chatillon, who sings a catch to persuade his majesty to put every living soul to the sword, as *le brave* La Noue does another about *la loi fondamentale*. In short, the nation has jumbled itself into such a hodge-podge of philosophy, which they set to music, and of eloquence, which they dress with all sauces, that their productions are monsters of pedantry. I have not met with a page that is worth bringing you. The Academy of Marseilles have given for their next subject, the *Éloge* of Madame de Sevigné. How the good soul would stare if she knew it! Adieu, Madam, and adieu, Paris!

1533. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Paris, Oct. 6, 1775.

It will look like a month since I wrote to you; but I have been coming, and am. Madame du Deffand has been so ill, that the day she was seized I thought she would not live till night. Her Herculean weakness, which could not resist strawberries and cream after supper, has surmounted all the *ups* and *downs* which followed her excess; but her impatience to go everywhere and to do everything has been attended with a kind of relapse, and another kind of giddiness; so that I am not quite easy about her, as they allow her to take no nourishment to recruit, and she will die of inanition, if she does not live upon it. She cannot lift her head from the pillow without *étourdissemens;* and yet her spirits gallop faster than anybody's, and so do her repartees. She has a great supper to-night for the Duc de Choiseul, and was in such a passion yesterday with her cook about it, and that put Tonton into such a rage, that *nos dames de Saint Joseph* thought the devil or the philosophers were flying away with their convent! As I have scarce quitted her, I can have had nothing to tell you. If she gets well, as I trust, I shall set out on the 12th; but I cannot leave her in any danger—though I shall run many myself, if I stay longer. I have kept such bad hours with this *malade,* that I have had alarms of gout; and bad weather, worse inns, and a voyage in winter, will ill suit me. The fans arrived at a propitious moment, and she immediately had them opened on her bed, and felt all the patterns, and had all the papers described. She was all satisfaction and thanks, and swore me to do her full justice to Lady Aylesbury and Mrs. Damer. Lord Harrington and Lady Harriet are arrived; but have announced and persisted in a strict invisibility.

I know nothing of my *chère patrie,* but what I learn from the London Chronicle; and that tells me, that the trading towns are suing out *lettres de noblesse,* that is, entreating the King to put an end to commerce, that they may all be gentlemen. Here agriculture, economy, reformation, philosophy, are the *bon-ton* even at Court. The two nations seem to have crossed over and figured in; but as people that copy take the bad with the good, as well as the good with the bad, there was two days ago a great horse-race in the

plain de Sablon, between the Comte d'Artois,[1] the Duc de Chartres,[2] Monsieur de Conflans, and the Duc de Lauzun.[3] The latter won by the address of a little English postillion, who is in such fashion that I don't know whether the Academy will not give him for the subject of an *éloge*.

The Duc de Choiseul, I said, is here; and, as he has a second time put off his departure, *cela fait beaucoup de bruit*. I shall not be at all surprised if he resumes the reins, as (forgive me a pun) he has the *Reine* already. Messrs. de Turgot and Malesherbes certainly totter—but I shall tell you no more till I see you; for though this goes by a private hand, it is so private, that I don't know it, being an English merchant's, who lodges in this hotel, and whom I do not know by sight: so, perhaps, I may bring you word of this letter myself. I flatter myself Lady Aylesbury's arm has recovered its straightness and its cunning.

Madame du Deffand says, I love you better than anything in the world. If true, I hope you have not less penetration: if you have not, or it is not true, what would professions avail?—So I leave that matter in suspense. Adieu!

Oct. 7.

Madame du Deffand was quite well yesterday; and at near one this morning I left the Duc de Choiseul, the Duchesse de Grammont, the Prince and Princess of Beauvau, Princess of Poix,[4] the Maréchale de Luxembourg, Duchesse de Lauzun, Ducs de Gontaut[5] et de Chabot, and Caraccioli, round her *chaise longue;* and she herself was not a dumb personage. I have not heard yet how she has slept, and must send away my letter this moment, as I must dress to go to dinner with Monsieur de Malesherbes at Madame de Villegagnon's. I must repose a great while after all this living in company; nay, intend to go very little into the world again, as I do

[1] Afterwards Charles the Tenth.—Wright.

[2] On the death of his father, in 1785, he became Duke of Orleans. In 1792, he was chosen a member of the National Convention, when he adopted the Jacobinical title of Louis-Philippe-Joseph Egalité; and, in November 1793, he suffered by the guillotine.—Wright.

[3] The Duc de Lauzun, son of the Duc de Gontaut, the maternal nephew of the Duchesse de Choiseul.—Wright.

[4] Wife of the Prince de Poix, eldest son of the Maréchal de Mouchy, and daughter of the Prince de Beauvau. The Prince de Poix retired to this country on the breaking out of the French revolution, accompanied by his son, Comte Charles de Noailles, who married the daughter of La Borde, the great banker.—Wright.

[5] The Duc de Gontaut, brother to the Maréchal Duc de Biron, and father to the Duc de Lauzun. The Duchesse de Gontaut was a sister of the Duchesse de Choiseul.—Wright.

not admire the French way of burning one's candle to the very snuff in public. Tell Mrs. Damer, that the fashion now is to erect the *toupée* into a high detached tuft of hair, like a cockatoo's crest; and this *toupée* they call *la physionomie*—I don't guess why.

My laquais is come back from St. Joseph's, and says Marie[1] de Vichy has had a very good night, and is quite well.—Philip![2] let my chaise be ready on Thursday.[3]

1534. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Paris, Oct. 10, 1775.

I AM still here, though on the wing. Your answer to mine from hence was sent back to me from England; as I have loitered here beyond my intention; in truth, from an indisposition of mind. I am not impatient to be in a frantic country, that is stabbing itself in every vein. The delirium still lasts; though, I believe, kept up by the quacks that caused it. Is it credible that five or six of the great *trading* towns have presented addresses against the Americans? I have no doubt but those addresses are procured by those boobies the country gentlemen, their members, and bought of the Aldermen; but, is it not amazing that the merchants and manufacturers do not duck such tools in a horse-pond? When the storm will recoil I do not know, but it will be terrible in all probability, though too late. Never shall we be again what we have been! Other powers, who sit still, and wisely suffer us to plunge over head and ears, will perhaps be alarmed at what they write from England, that we are to buy twenty thousand Russian assassins, at the price of Georgia: how deep must be our game, when we pursue it at the expense of establishing a new maritime power, and aggrandise that engrossing throne, which threatens half Europe, for the satisfaction of enslaving

[1] The maiden name of Madame du Deffand was Marie de Vicny Chamrond. She was born in 1697, of a noble family in the province of Burgundy; and, as her fortune was small, she was married by her parents, in 1718, to the Marquis du Deffand; the union being settled with as little attention to her feelings as was usual in French marriages of that age. A separation soon took place; but Walpole says they always continued on good terms, and that upon her husband's death-bed, at his express desire, she saw him.—WRIGHT.

[2] Mr. Walpole's valet-de-chambre.—WALPOLE.

[3] Walpole left Paris on the 12th, upon which day Madame du Deffand thus wrote to him:—"Adieu! ce mot est bien triste! Souvenez que vous laissez ici la personne dont vous êtes le plus aimé, et dont le bonheur et le malheur consistent dans ce que vous pensez pour elle. Donnez-moi de vos nouvelles le plus tôt qu'il sera possible."—WRIGHT.

our own brethren! Horrible policy! If the Americans, as our papers say, are on the point of seizing Canada, I should think that France would not long remain neuter, when she may regain her fur trade with the Canadians, or obtain Canada from the Americans: but it is endless to calculate what we may lose. Our Court has staked everything against despotism; and the nation, which must be a loser, whichever side prevails, takes part against the Americans, who fight for the nation as well as for themselves! What Egyptian darkness!

This country is far more happy. It is governed by benevolent and beneficent men, under a prince who has not yet betrayed a fault, and who will be as happy as his people if he always employs such men. Messieurs de Turgot and Malesherbes are philosophers in the true sense, that is, legislators; but, as their plans tend to serve the public, you may be sure they do not please interested individuals. The French, too, are light and fickle; and designing men, who have no weapon against good men but ridicule, already employ it to make a trifling nation laugh at its benefactors: and, if it is the fashion to laugh, the laws of fashion will be executed preferably to those of common sense.

There is a great place just vacant. The Maréchal de Muy, Secrétaire d'État pour la Guerre, died yesterday, having been cut the day before for the stone. The operation lasted thirty-five ages, that is, minutes!

Our Parliament meets on the 26th, and I suppose will act as infamously as it did last year. It cannot do worse,—scarcely so ill, for now it cannot act inconsiderately. To joke in voting a civil war is the *comble* of infamy. I hope it will present flattering addresses on our disgraces, and heap taxes on those who admire the necessity of them. If the present generation alone would be punished by inviting the yoke, it were pity but it were already on their necks! Do not wonder at my indignation, nor at my indulging it. I can write freely hence—from England, where I may find the Inquisition, it would not be so prudent; but judge of our situation, when an Englishman, to speak his mind, must come to France! and hither I will come unless the times alter. I had rather live where a Maupeou [Chancellor of France] is banished, than where he is Chief Justice.[1]

I know nothing of their Royal Highnesses [the Duke and Duchess

[1] Alluding to Lord Mansfield.—Walpole.

of Gloucester], nor have heard of them since they were at Strasburg. I wrote twice to Venice; and if they think me in England, and have written thither, I should have received the letter, as I did yours, unless it is stopped. I can give you no advice, but to act prudently and decently, as you always do. If you receive orders, you must obey them. If you do not, you may show disposition; and yet I would not go too far. Even under orders, you may intimate concern; but I would express nothing in writing. My warmth may hurt myself, but never shall make me forget the interest of my friends. Adieu!

1535. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Oct. 17, 1775.

Princess, in spite of fortune, fate, and chance,
I'm once again return'd to you from France.

I WILL not maintain, Madam, that this couplet is absolutely stolen out of any French play, but it is so like the *début* of many of their tragedies, that I think it could not have come into my head if I had not remembered it. Whether it is Racine's or not, it suits my purpose so exactly, that I could not help employing it, and I beg your Ladyship will believe the sentiment sincere, though couched in poetry. I will not quote Virgil for the circumstance of my journey, for I was much more *terris jactatus* than *alto;* the roads were very rough, but the sea so smooth that it cost fifteen hours to pass from Calais to Dover, what wind there was being perfectly neuter. However, here I am, and as my motto says, ever yours, &c.

P.S. My letter concluded so happily, that though professional and civil conclusions are totally out of fashion, I could not help ending there; but to take off the formality, I add a few words; and to tell you I have bought your two bobbins and a bit of china; no, it is not come, but I hope will, and will be a great rarity: for to my sorrow I did not know that last year's Act, to favour the Bristol manufacturer, laid a duty of one hundred and fifty per cent. on French china, and I paid at Dover seven guineas and a half for a common set of coffee things that had cost me but five. As I came but this morning, I have not time to add more, though I would not let the newspaper have the pleasure of telling you that I was arrived.

P.S. I left poor Mr. Crawfurd flayed alive, that is, his foot—I never saw so horrid a sight. The quack brought off the whole coat of his foot at once, and it looks like a leg anatomised and thrown on a dunghill; yet the man had made him walk a mile on it the day before I set out. My Lord Lovat might as well have put on a cravat after his head was off.

1536. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 21, 1775.

I COULD tell you, Madam, when the moon will change, but not when Mr. Crawfurd will set out. Poor soul! I do not guess when he will be able; but, perhaps, he will attempt it for variety. However, pray write to him; it will be kind, and direct it to Mr. Panchaud. If your letter misses him, there will be no great harm, as I suppose you will not tell him any great secrets.

For my visiting Ampthill just now, it is totally impossible. I have run strangely in debt to my own business, and find my hands full. I had left a purchase or two here unfinished. My poor sister, Mrs. Daye, is dead, and I have her affairs to settle. General Cholmondeley has made me one of his executors, and though I shall give up that charge, I must give it up, and must go to town to-morrow upon it. I have commissions from France to execute; and, in short, have such a jumble of two nations in my head, that I want a few days of entire repose, before I shall get into my common sense again. Besides, come to Ampthill! Why is not your Ladyship coming to town? I will not deliver a bobbin but in Seymour-place, nor make a visit farther out of town.

1537. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Oct. 23, 1775.

THIS will be delivered to you by Mr. Pars,[1] a painter, who is going to improve himself in Italy. He has already great merit, and has done several things for me, particularly washed drawings of Strawberry, of which he can talk to you very perfectly. This was his style originally. He executed an excellent volume full of

[1] Mr. Pars died at Rome in 1782.—WALPOLE.

them for Lord Palmerston,[1] one of the Lords of the Admiralty, his protector. He has since taken to oil and portraits. Pray assist him as much as you can, particularly by strong recommendations to Rome and Cardinal Albani.[2] Pray, too, make him do a view of Fiesole for me. He is very modest, sensible, and intelligent, and not mad, or I would not recommend him so strongly. I give him a letter to Sir William Hamilton.

1538. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 25, 1775.

I AM returned to my own Lares and Penates—to my dogs and cats; and was not a little edified by my journey. I saw a king who accords everything that is asked for the good of his people, and I saw two ministers, Messieurs de Malesherbes and Turgot, who do not let their master's benevolent disposition rust. The latter is attempting to take off *corvées*, that *quintesse* of cruel and ostentatious despotism, but the *country gentlemen*, that race of interested stupidity, will baffle him. Monsieur de Malesherbes, in the most simple and unaffected manner, gave me an account of his visitation of the Bastile, whence he released the prisoners, half of whom were mad with their misfortunes, and many of whom he could not find even the causes of their commitment. One man refused his liberty: he said he had been prisoner fifteen years, and had nothing in the world left; that the King lodged and fed him, and he would not quit the Bastile unless they would give him half his pension. M. de Malesherbes reported it to the King, who replied, "*C'est juste*," and the man has fifteen hundred livres a year and his freedom. This excellent magistrate, who made my tears run down my cheeks, added, that what the prisoners complained of most was the want of pen and ink. He ordered it. The demons remonstrated and said the prisoners would only make use of the pen to write memorials against the Ministers; he replied, "*Tant mieux.*" He is going to erect a court of six masters of Request to examine the petitions of those who demand *lettres de cachet* for their relations. Under the late Duc de la Vrillière, his mistress, Madame Sabatin, had a bureau of printed *lettres de cachet* with blanks, which she sold

[1] Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston. Mr. Pars had been in Switzerland with his lordship to take views.—WALPOLE.

[2] Cardinal Alexander Albani, youngest nephew of Clement XI. and a great lover of *virtù*. He was also a friend to England.—WALPOLE.

for twenty-five louis a piece. When a great Scotch judge was last in France, at the restoration of the old parliament, he said, "If the Ministers mean the good of the people, they are doing right, but if they regard the prerogative of the Crown, very wrong." What a diabolical But! Do not imagine these Ministers will hold their places long; they will soon be epigrammatised out of them. The first event since my return, after hearing of this gaol-delivery, is Mr. Sayer being sent to the Bastile; but it is not the prisoners in this country that are mad, but the Ministers. They have committed him for designing to steal the Tower and the King, he and one more; and I suppose send them to New York; not to Halifax, for that is gone, and Quebec too, and Boston by this time. So now we know what we have to do; only, retake all America, which is very easy, from three hundred thousand cowards.

26th, Arlington Street.

I had written thus far last night, as you perceive, and find your letter on my return, for which I would thank you more if you did not say such fine things to me. Pray never do any more; I have no talent, nor anything else but taste for those who have, and that taste is almost a sinecure. If I had time I could increase your 'Kingstoniana' with still better stories, but she is not worth one's while. I have but just a moment to ask if there is any chance of seeing you this winter, which would be a great comfort, and I am not young enough to put off my pleasures. Adieu!

Pray did you pay Mr. Peckitt? Tell me that I may pay you or him.

1539. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Oct. 27, 1775.

I was at Strawberry Hill when your letter arrived, and could not thank you for it so early as I should have done if I had received it sooner. If my description of the *Moulin joli* pleased you, it was from the circumstances of the place, for I neither describe well nor recount well, nor have any original talent. I pretend to nothing but taste for talents, and that taste is almost a sinecure. I am returned because I wanted to be *at home;* not that I was particularly charmed with France, or impatient to be in England; but when one is old and has no particular business anywhere, methinks one is *deplacé* any where but *chez soi.* The *Amor patriæ* burns in me no fiercer than love for my wife would, if I had one and she proved a

shrew. I love the free constitution of England more than the acres, and should wish better to California if it had the better form of government; not but I can feel the pride of patriotism when my country is worth being proud of: when it sinks by its own folly, I content myself with my citizenship of the world, and pray for that part that is most reasonable.

I could improve your 'Kingstoniana' if I had leisure; the subject in truth is little worth it, but as superlative in its kind. My chief business with you is to know if I am likely to see you this winter. My pleasures grow dear to me because I have no long time to enjoy them, and cannot live on hopes. Though I still live in the world, most of my hours are passed alone, because they are not passed with the few I love, and all the rest are perfectly indifferent to me. Old people are thought to have little affection: how is that possible, for they seem to like company to the last? I should as soon think of taking leave of everybody if I was dying. Of my contemporaries for whom I do not care, I have seen or known enough, or too much, and to converse with young people is like asking for the beginning of a story of which one is never to hear the end. With you I can never pass time enough, and alas! pass very little; you are not, ought not to be so indifferent to the world as I am, and as you live more out of it, why should not you keep up a little acquaintance with it? Your chief reason against coming is worn out by length of time, and other circumstances are such as to dispense with the reiteration of the grievance. It would not be expected, and probably not desired; I dare to say the coolness is sufficiently established.

As I am in town you may expect to talk of what you will see so much in the newspapers, the commitment of Mr. Sayer; but it appears to me so nonsensical a business, that I charitably conclude the Ministers have some deeper scheme in view. They can never have sent a man to the Tower that they should have sent to Bedlam, if they do not want a pretence for greater strokes; or choose to be laughed at for this, rather than have the people find fault with something else. However, they have brought themselves into such difficulties that I shall not wonder if they are puzzled which to prefer, and as it certainly is not genius that has led them into the scrape, it is not likely to help them out.

Tell me what is more to my purpose, what you have been doing. I am going to read 'Sterne's Letters.' From Paris I have absolutely brought nothing at all: my good friend, Europe, is worn out; perhaps genius may rekindle in America, but what is that to me? Adieu!

P.S. I have run through a volume of 'Sterne's Letters,' and have read more unentertaining stuff. The Duke of Grafton, Lord Lyttelton, and the Bishop of Peterborough divided yesterday with the Opposition. Don't you think the ship is sinking? Come and see.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR: *Wentworth Castle, Nov.* 20, 1775.

I HAVE had your fashionable London influenza for above a fortnight (fresh imported to Aston by Mr. Verelst,[2] and kindly communicated to me in a post-chaise). Upon my getting a little better I came hither to pay my respects to Lord and Lady Strafford, to whom I had long owed a visit, and who have long been particularly civil to me, much of which civility I have always imputed to the partiality of your friendship for me. Be this as it may, here I am, and much better for my journey, and a long walk which I took yesterday in a clear frosty morning with his Lordship. All this, if you can make an apology out of it, for I hardly can, is meant for one to you for my silence. Certain it is, my cold and the having nothing to say, prevented my writing at home; and as I meditated then a visit here, I thought I should perhaps find something more to say from hence. In this, however, I am mistaken, for except condoling with you for that you have lately lost 40*l.* at loo, to Mrs. Howe (which latter circumstance only is our topic of condolence, for if you had flung it into the Thames we should not have cared a whit about the matter), I find little more to put into my letter. One thing, however, may be necessary to hint, that you are not quite in the odour of sanctity here for your long silence; but this I only gather from half-dropt expressions, and these always accompanied with sentiments of great kindness, so that if you was to write a line or two soon, and before you see them in town, I think it would be well taken.

You are very kind to me in your last by expressing so great a desire of seeing me soon in town, and I feel, I assure you, as I ought on the subject and wish as much to be with you as you can wish it. But my reasons for staying in Yorkshire at present are very urgent. The manner in which Lord Holdernesse has disposed of his Aston estate, of which Mr. Verelst has bought only a fourth part, and the rest sold in small parcels, will occasion so much difficulty in regulating my tithes with the new proprietors, that it is absolutely necessary I should be on the spot till after New Year's day, and then this matter will in fact be all settled, not by me, but my curate, Mr. Alderson, whose judgment and honesty I can fully depend upon. Yet I must appear to do it myself, to prevent any odium that might fall upon him from the parish; and indeed without my personal assent to every new contract they would not be valid. Early in February I must repair to my York residence; therefore till the beginning of May, I cannot possibly think of setting my face southward, but then I fully intend it. The Hertford street reason against my coming which you call, and which was once my chief reason, is now none at all.

Political matters seem now to be in such a state as to resemble the reign of "Chaos and Old Night,"—nay, to be the identical thing; but as that state was not without its deity, therefore in order to keep myself out of an uncomfortable atheistical way of thinking, I intend to worship Old Night in the form of that brazen image commonly called the Duchess of Bedford. I hope you will join with me in my devotions.

You ask me what I am doing: I am very innocently and very leisurely printing in the York press a few copies of my English garden, *il faut cultiver le jardin;* but this, God be thanked, I do not say in the spirit or meaning of Voltaire. In this way of printing I copy my betters, and have the thoughts of publishing as far from me, as that very ingenious writer had who printed five years ago a History of the same art. I question whether either production will be *publici juris* till they are reprinted at

[2] Mason's Nabob-cousin.—CUNNINGHAM.

1540. TO THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.

My Dear Lord: *Oct.* 27, 1775.

You have not been a very active opposition, but may plead in excuse that you could do no good. *Now* you can—or never. Give the Ministers no respite. Press them with questions and motions, leave their poor heads no time to think of what they ought to think of, the next campaign. Call for papers. Don't mind being refused. Talk of their waste. Ask for pension lists, inquire after those scandalous ones to the widows or wives of Bradshaw, Nuthall, Fordyce. Lament the hard fate of the *poor country gentlemen* who must pay for all this waste, and the enormous expenses of the war too. Inquire how much of the national debt has been paid in twelve years —and how much the late addresses have cost. Ask if 5000*l.* has not been sent this year to bribe the Indians, who yet have not joined *them.* Ask what douceurs have been given to Scotch contractors. Ask what the Catholics in Canada have done in return for the restoration of their religion and the abolition of juries—and will you not ask who was the author of that code? Is abolition of juries part of the spirit of toleration? Will you not inquire whether Lord Dunmore has not for these two years (before the Virginians took any part) endeavoured to involve them in a war with the Indians. Will you not ask whether they have not tried to raise Roman Catholics in Ireland? Suppose you inquired what the prosecutions of Wilkes cost (above 100,000*l.*), and whether they intend (for the ease of country gentlemen) to lay out as much on Sayer. Will you not complain how long the half-pay was delayed, nor inquire into the expenses of the transports to Boston? Will you not lament the hard fate of the soldiers forced to go against their countrymen, and then left without bark or bandages for their wounds, and with nothing but salt provisions? Will you not smile at Gage being recalled and made Generalissimo? In short, will you neither laugh nor cry, or will you leave them to laugh if you do not make them cry? The Duke of Grafton and Lord Lyttelton see

Philadelphia with the *imprimatur* of John Handcock, *Americæ Septentrionalis, R. P. Protector,* and that I suppose can hardly happen this current year. The Lord and Lady of this place send all sorts of good wishes to you. Believe me to be, dear Sir, with perfect sincerity,

Yours,

W. Mason.

their difficulties—will you not make them feel them? Why did General Burgoyne desire to be recalled? and why is he still employed? Since the Prerogative Proclamation cuts off all intercourse, is Parliament to vote money in the dark? Will you not move to know whether Halifax and Nova Scotia and Quebec are gone? Will you not complain of all intelligence being stifled, and the nation being kept in profound ignorance and delusion? Are there no petitions from the West Indian Islands? Shall not the good country gentlemen be let into their situation? In short, my dear Lord, if you please, you may pelt and harass them with questions and delays, which they will attend more to than to America. Frighten them, or at least other people, with the French preparing to attack us in the East Indies. And pray ask whether the Stocks have not been kept up by the trust-money in Chancery. I will engage to furnish you with motions and grievances to midsummer—and if you keep this and turn to it, you will not want subjects. Tell them of all their false promises and prophecies, not one of which has been fulfilled; and do not forget Lord Hillsborough's breach of the King's faith. You have spirit and activity enough yourself, my Lord—breathe it into your friends; and make them inquire whether the conciliatory commissioners are gone, and what their commissions are; and whether they expect the Americans will trust them, *when the vile Equivocatory Bill of conciliation last year Lord North himself could not carry till Wedderburn declared it was not meant in earnest?*—but is it not plain, by their having recourse to it in the Speech, that they are already treating? Nor is this the only falsehood in the Speech: they talk of foreign Powers offering them troops; is *begging* being *offered?* And if those foreign Powers are not Russia, but little Hesse, &c., are those foreign *Powers?* I would even move to address, that if Russians are sent, no post may be put into their hands—no matter for a negative being put; it would get into the votes and spread jealousy.

There, my Lord, is a plan for your campaign. I am very presumptuous; but I will ask an account of it at the end of the session. I hope you are content with Mr. C.[1]

[1] The following letter from the Duke of Richmond to Walpole is now first published:—

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND TO HORACE WALPOLE.

My Dear Sir: *Goodwood, May 9, 1775.*

Many thanks to you for the Duc D'Aiguillon's Correspondence, which is enough to convince you and I, and every impartial man, that Lord Rochford in the House of

1541. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Oct. 28, 1775.

As this letter will go to Paris by a private hand before it gets to the post, I shall not change the late free style of my letters, but speak my mind. Not having always the same opportunity, I shall be more circumspect both for your sake and my own.

Lords, and Lord North in the House of Commons, were not very correct in the account they gave of the disarming; but yet it is not sufficient to convict them legally of giving a false account, for all this is upon the word of two Frenchmen, and our Ministers will say they are not to be credited. Perhaps some day or other we may come at more complete evidence. I shall be in London the 16th instant to attend a motion of Lord Camden's about the Quebec Bill, and will then return you your pamphlet with many thanks.

You abuse me for leaving town, for preferring the enjoyment of the country to the care of the nation. All amusements ought certainly to give way to duties, and though I prefer living in this place to any other, though I am never well in London, I would readily sacrifice both health and amusement, if I found that after all I did any good by attending to politics; but if I do none, surely it is pardonable to follow my inclinations, and where, I hope, I do some good too. The East India Company's affairs have given me a strong proof that one often does real harm with the best intentions. I found it in a wavering state, roguery and private jobs pulling hard against their own general interest. I thought that my taking a part might do some good, unite some straggling parties, and make a head against their directors, who were selling them. All my plans succeeded as I could wish. I had not hoped too much. Many different sets united with me, and we convinced the proprietors that they should be firm and resist. They did so, but our victories in Leadenhall Street have for ever lost the independency of the Company. The very thing I stirred to prevent has happened. The Ministry, finding they were detected and foiled upon the old constitution of the Company, were driven to alter that constitution by force and arbitrary Acts of Parliament. This I could not foresee or help. I had not the parliament as I had the proprietors, and now it is irretrievably gone. If I had not united the Company against the Ministers, they would have been content to thieve a little by connivance, and the resources of the constitution might have been left to be more fortunately exercised. So it might be with the State if I, or any man, had it in his power to unite the country against the Ministry. They would overturn the constitution, and the army would be to the nation what parliament has been to the India Company,—an engine of violence and oppression. I don't say, that could I hope to be as lucky in uniting the nation as I was the proprietors, I would not try—I certainly should, and should think the nation a better match for the army, than the proprietors were for the parliament.

But alas, my dear Sir, what prospect is there (I will not say that I) but that any man can bring this country to its senses? Indeed, I fear it is quite labour in vain to attempt it, and particularly for me, who lie under so many disadvantages. All I can do, is now and then to join with a few to show the nation, that although but a few, yet all are not sold. I know what you will say to all this: that activity and perseverance will do a great deal, and that one must not give things up, for that if everybody does, there are no hopes left. But, my dear Sir, recollect that to be very active in any business, one must be very healthy. I am not often so here, but never in London, and to attempt politics without health is sailing in a very leaky boat. Indeed, these considerations strongly induce me to think it better and more prudent to be

At my return I found everything in great confusion. The Ministers had only provoked and united—not intimidated, wounded, or divided America. Errors in or neglect of execution have rendered everything much worse; and at this instant they are not sure that the King has a foot of dominion left on that continent. Boston must be, if it is not, abandoned: Halifax, with a stand of seven thousand arms, artillery, &c., is taken,[1]—and well it might be! It was guarded but by fifty men! Canada is in equal danger, and the first letters are likely to say that it is gone. The Ministers say that it will take sixty thousand men to reconquer America. They will as soon have sixty thousand armies. Whether they can get any Russians is not even yet certain; and, as it is said they must buy them by ceding some post, it is not credible that the other European powers will wink at that growing puissance becoming a maritime one. Distress and difficulties increase every day, and genius does not increase in proportion.

Before I tell you of the opening of the Parliament, I must treat you with a farce, which is contrary to the theatric rule. Whether they were frightened themselves, or meant to frighten others, two days before the meeting, the Ministers cried out, A plot! and took and committed to the Tower a Mr. Sayer, a banker of no great credit, and lately one of Wilkes's sheriffs. A young American officer of still worse character, swore Sayer had tried to bribe him to betray the Tower; and, as if that was not trusting him enough, communicated his intention of seizing the King as he should go to the House. The Ministers, as grave as they looked, could not keep anybody from laughing—no, though they trebled the Guards. In short, I have heard this morning, that they have blundered in the warrant, just as they did in Wilkes's, must release Sayer, and he will be at liberty, instead of being, as he ought to be, in Bedlam. Earl Rochford[2] will be prosecuted in his room, instead of being shut up for a fool, as he ought to be.

In both Houses the war was brisk and warm; the Lords sat till eleven, and the Commons till four, and the Court was galled, though

satisfied with doing some little good here, and to enjoy more health and satisfaction than London can afford. Forgive this long detail, but your partiality and kindness make me wish to satisfy you that I am acting reasonably, and not from indolence or disgust. Adieu! Love me a little, and be assured that I am ever, your very faithful

Humble Servant,

(Signed) RICHMOND.

[1] This did not prove true.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Secretary of State who committed Sayer.—WALPOLE.

it kept the field. In the former House the Lord Privy Seal [Grafton] deserted and fired on them; so did the *virtuous* Lord Lyttelton,[1] whom they have so much tried to blanch; but as they had only given him whitewash, money to buy it, he is seeking to plunder from the other camp. In the Commons, Mr. Conway, in a better speech than ever was made, exposed all their outrages and blunders; and Charles Fox told Lord North, that not Alexander nor Cæsar had ever conquered so much as he had lost in one campaign. Even his Lordship's friends, nay the Scotch, taunt him in public with his laziness.

This is a sketch of the present situation: I think it will not mend abroad, and must grow more turbulent at home. France and Spain, by only feeding the war underhand, can baffle all our attempts; and without their declaring themselves, we must exhaust our men, money, navies, and trade. These are the four trifling articles we pay for the old scheme of arbitrary power. When will the Kings of England learn how great they may be by the constitution; how sure of ruin if they try to be despotic? Cannot the fate of the Stuarts teach even the House of Hanover to have common sense? In the mean time, if France has the sense[2] to keep its present Ministers, it will soon be greater than ever. I could not have believed, if I had not seen with my own eyes, how very flourishing it is to what it was four years ago. It is safe, too, in that country to indulge the people in plenty, ease, liberty; for they who could admire even Louis Quatorze, adored Henri Quatre; but what signify common-place reflections? Princes do not read my letters, but always forfeit their own greatness by listening to Ministers who dip them in visions of power only to augment their own. A king might go to sleep and be happy, and let his people be so, if he had no Ministers, who would abuse his authority during his nap. Adieu! my dear Sir; I have not time or occasion to say more. I have given you a clue to my future letters, and you will not want to have notes to them.

1542. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Nov. 9, 1775.

You say ironically, Madam, that I do not think at all about politics. I object to the expression, more than to the purport of

[1] Thomas, second Lord Lyttelton.—Walpole.

[2] It had not; Turgot was removed, and Malesherbes resigned.—Walpole.

that phrase, if you mean by it that I am eager. The truth is, I think too seriously on our present situation to be eager. Eagerness implies hopes—and I have none. I think this country undone, almost beyond redemption. Victory in any war but a civil one fascinates mankind with a vision of glory. What should we gain by triumph itself? Would America laid waste, deluged with blood, plundered, enslaved, replace America flourishing, rich, and free? Do we want to reign over it, as the Spaniards over Peru, depopulated? Are desolate regions preferable to commercial cities? But if the Provincials conquer, are they, like lovers, to kiss and be friends? Who are the heroes, where are the statesmen, that shall restore us to the position in which we stood two years ago?

These reflections fill me with melancholy, not with ardour. My pride, as an Englishman, is hurt. I often go to France without loving that country, and I know with indignation, I saw with indignation, that they exult in our blunders and absurdity. We have already saved them more than half the labour of the next war, and shall bring it on as soon again as it would have come. *Then* will the Ministers triumph? *Then* will begging another peace avail? Perhaps I am foolish to feel all this. Young men that must live to see it would have reason to be hurt, if young men were so ill-employed as to anticipate the vexations of age. I probably have little time to be witness to the humiliations that are approaching. Father Paul's *esto perpetua!* was more the prayer of a good man, than of a wise one. Countries are but great families, that rise from obscurity to dignity and then degenerate. This little island, that for many centuries was but a merchant, married a *great fortune* in the last war, got a title, grew insolent and extravagant, despised its original counter, quarrelled with its factors, kicked its plebeian wife out of doors, and thought, by putting on an old red coat, to hector her relations out of the rest of her fortune, which remained in their hands as trustees. Europe, that was jealous of this upstart captain's sudden rise, encouraged him in his folly, in hopes of seeing him quite undone. End of volume the first. The second part is in the press.

News of to-day.—The Duke of Grafton dismissed.

News of to-morrow.—Lord George Germaine, Secretary of State.

No news.—Lord Lyttelton to have a place.

I have been in pain for the Duke of Gloucester; but as no account has come since last Friday, I flatter myself he is out of danger, his disorder being the same as he had before when last at Florence, and

which would either have carried him off soon, or must have been stopped by the bark, as I trust it has been. But I am prepared against all events: time is a great philosophiser. You say you augur so ill, Madam, that you will not be scandalised at the gravity of my letter. Mine take their complexion from the colour of the hour, and, as cheerfulness oftenest predominates in me, I shall laugh again. It is very hard if they who are innocent of their country's ruin may not smile, as well as they who are guilty of it. I can conceive why Cæsar should have cut his own throat, but I never understood why Cato did.

1543. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Nov. 14, 1775.

Your letter, my dear Sir, of the 28th, which I received last night, is infinitely kind to me—but is that new? We had not only been alarmed to the utmost about the Duke [of Gloucester], but remained ten days in that anxiety. Thank God! yesterday, a letter under his own hand dispelled all our fears, and he is so well as to be set out to Rome. I am very sorry you had received no orders for your behaviour, because it leaves the Duke room to think you might have done more than I hope you have done; but your first duty is to the King; you were my friend long before I had the honour of knowing his Royal Highness, and no attachments of mine can make me ever even wish that any friend of mine should act contrary to his duty. I am sure you have not; and if the Duke should not be quite pleased with you, though I flatter myself he is too just not to weigh your situation, you must bear it with patience, and comfort yourself with having acted rightly.

Though I hear so much of it, I know not what to say of America. It is certain that the campaign has answered none of the expectations of the Administration. It seems to be the opinion now that they will think of pacific measures. They have even talked in Parliament of treating. You may be sure that system would be agreeable to my politics; but I doubt peace is not so near. The Parliament grants whatever is asked; and yet a great alteration has happened in the Administration. The Duke of Grafton has changed sides, and was turned out last Friday. Lord Rochford, too, has retired, though not out of humour; and Lord Dartmouth has quitted the American province and taken the Privy Seal. Lord George Ger-

maine is made Secretary of State for America, and Lord Weymouth has taken the southern province. Lord Ashburnham is to be Groom of the Stole, Lord Pelham Master of the Great Wardrobe, and Lord Lyttelton Justice in Eyre. The town is impatient to see whether this change of men implies any change of measures. I do not see why it should, for none of the new Ministers have ever inclined to the Americans; and I doubt whether the success of the latter will make them have a better disposition towards the present Administration. They have felt their strength, and experienced how much less hurt we can do them than we imagined. If they have such ideas of independence as have been imputed to them, and as probably some ambitious men among them may have, we have done nothing to convince them that their plan is impracticable; but for me, I own I know nothing, and all my conjectures may be wrong.

We have scarce any other news. Madame Kingston has petitioned the House of Lords for her trial; but they seem eager neither to acquit nor condemn her. Nobody would mind the first, and she would not mind the second, as it would go only to infamy, which she has shown she can digest.

Orloff the Great, or rather the Big,[1] is here; and as proud of his infamous diamonds as the Duchess of Kingston herself. He dances gigantic dances and makes gigantic love; but not conquests: yet he has quitted his post with honour, for the Empress has appointed two to supply his functions—I suppose they are Gog and Magog. Orloff talks an infinite deal of nonsense; but parts are not necessary to a royal favourite or to an assassin.

I am rejoiced you are to have so much of your nephew, and that Lady Lucy is better. I long heartily for a little *Man-n.*

You will ere long see Mr. Pars, a young painter, who is going to study at Rome. I had given him a strong letter to you. Poor man! He has lost his portmanteau between Calais and Paris, and with it everything he had in the world, yet he persists. Pray be kind to him for my sake and for his misfortune. He is very ingenious, and has taken to oils. He was admirable in washed views, and has done several of Strawberry, of which he can talk to you by heart. Assist him too in recommendations at Rome as much as you can. He is particularly patronised by Lord Palmerston, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

[1] The favourite lover of the Empress Catherine II.—WALPOLE.

So the Pretender is in a dying way! and wants an heir!—It is not a race of phœnixes. Sir Roger Newdigate is at Rome, and formerly would have been proud to be chief mourner at his funeral.

You may imagine I shall not be quite easy till the Duchess [of Gloucester] is delivered and well. I trembled for her when the Duke was ill, as his death might have occasioned hers too.

1544. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Nov. 18, 1775.

Be perfectly at ease and happy, our lady! for *our* Lord spoke with modesty, decency, dignity, sense, and conviction. He regretted being forced to quit his friends, though not so much as they regret his quitting them: all this I firmly believe, for I know nothing of the matter, having gone out of town yesterday, and being but this minute returned.[1] I do know he spoke, for he told me so himself when I called yesterday to leave your cup with him; but as he is the last man in the world to commend himself, he would not tell me a syllable, but that he soon recovered the first awful moment of hearing his own voice in a dead silence. I will answer for all the rest. He said his brother spoke charmingly, and Charles Fox better than ever. He made such a pathetic *éloge* of the two brothers that every feeling eye was in tears. I am going about the town to hear all their praises, but I must not expect them in some houses. Oh! *notre dame*, give us a son and heir! I would vow a silver babe to Loretto, if that would do.

1545. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Nov. 23, 1775.

As the two ladies must be very angry at Lord O., I am not much surprised, Madam, that they impute his desertion to you. They must both think it a great reflection on a man's understanding to be governed by his wife; and to charge it on your Ladyship, is to depreciate *him*. In truth, when one can fix the blemish of madness

[1] I cannot understand this account. Lord Ossory voted for the motion of Mr. Burke, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for composing the present troubles, and for quieting the minds of his Majesty's subjects in America;" so did Mr. Fitzpatrick, so did Mr. Fox, all Lord Ossory's friends, on Nov. 16.—R. Vernon Smith.

on Mr. Crewe, only to keep another nephew from making him a visit, one must have very little charity for one's neighbour. However, be easy, Madam; I dare to say they will make Lord Ossory amends by offering to buy him off, and if they could disgrace him in that manner, they would perfectly forgive him. The speeches have given me additional pleasure, as I hear a third aunt, who is not displeased at them, was told (before they spoke) that they were men of no consequence but from being her nephews. I hope they will keep up their own importance, or they will be swallowed up in Lord George's fame, who engrosses all tongues. He puts me in mind of some lines written by Lord Lansdowne, when prisoner in the Tower, in the same room where my father had been confined; the last verse was,

Some fall so hard, they bound and rise again.

I think nobody can doubt of Lord George's resolution, since he has exposed himself to the artillery of the whole town. Indeed I always believed him brave, and that he sacrificed himself to sacrifice Prince Ferdinand.

I wish I could tell you anything but politics, Madam, politician as you are christened by your god-mothers; but one hears nothing else. On Sunday night, indeed, I was singularly entertained at Monsieur de Guines's, who gave a vast supper to the Prince of Hesse and the Goddesses most in fashion, as the Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Sefton, &c. We were twenty-eight at supper; but before it, a Monsieur Tessier, of whom I have heard much in France, acted an entire play of ten characters, and varied his voice, and countenance, and manner, for each so perfectly, that he did not name the persons that spoke, nor was it necessary. I cannot decide to which part he did most justice, but I would go to the play every night if I could see it so acted.

I have heard to-day that your Ladyship has not the sole honour of perverting Lord Ossory. *I* am said to be the serpent that whispered Eve; and should be proud of it, if both imputations were not affronts to Lord Ossory's understanding, who will do me the justice to allow that I had so much more respect for it, that I never had the impertinence of his angry friends to imagine he was to be led; a civility for which he is not much obliged to them. Nor do they know how very seldom I see him, though I am so much in his way wherever he goes. It is an additional reason for my wishing your Ladyship in town, that I should see him sometimes. My poor old

Lady Blandford is dying; she fell down on Monday and broke her thigh—at 78!

P.S. As I was going to seal my letter, I received your Ladyship's thanks for the cup, which indeed did not deserve that you should give yourself so much trouble on purpose. You have always been so good to me, Madam, and I am so grateful that if my *souvenirs* were marked with cups, there would be many more than mile-stones from hence to Ampthill.

1546. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Nov. 27, 1775.

I THOUGHT it long since I heard from you. It is plain you did not forget me, for the first moment of an opportunity to show me kindness made you show it. Fortunately I had written to Lord Strafford the very day you wrote to me, and our letters passed each other, though without bowing. I think it still more fortunate that I had not written sooner, because I like to be obliged to you. I had delayed because in truth I had nothing to say but what I thought; and when my friends and I do not think alike, I prefer silence to contradiction or disputes, for I cannot say what I do not think, especially to my friends; to other people one can talk a good deal of nonsense, which serves instead of thinking.

Your delay of coming displeases me, because what I wish, I wish for immediately. When spring comes, I shall be glad my joy was postponed, and I like better to see you at Strawberry than in town, especially when Strawberry is in its beauty: and as you and it are two chiefs of the few pleasures I have left, or to come, I am luxurious and love a complete banquet.

What shall I say more? talk politics? no; we think too much alike. England was, Scotland is—indeed by the blunders the latter has made one sees its Irish origin,—but I had rather talk of anything else. I see nothing but ruin, whatever shall happen; and what idle solicitude is that of childless old people, who are anxious about the first fifty years after their death, and do not reflect that in the eternity to follow, fifty or five hundred years are a moment, and that all countries fall sooner or later.

Naturally I fly to books: there is a finis too, for I cannot read Dean Tucker, nor Newspapers. We have had nothing at all this

winter but 'Sterne's Letters,' and what are almost as nothingly—Lady Luxborough's. She does not write ill, or, as I expected, affectedly, like a woman, but talks of *scrawls*, and of her letters being *stupid*. She had no spirit, no wit, knew no events; she idolises poor Shenstone, who was scarce above her, and flatters him, to be flattered.[1] A stronger proof of her having no taste is, that she says coldly, she likes Gray's 'Churchyard' *well*.[2] In good truth the productions of this country and age are suited to its natives. Mr. Cumberland, the maker of plays, told me lately, it *was pity Gray's Letters were printed; they had disappointed him much*. No doubt he likes Sterne's, and Shenstone's, and Lady Luxborough's. Oh! Dodsley,[3] print away: you will never want authors or readers, unless a classic work like 'Gray's Life' should, as Richardson said of Milton, be "born two thousand years after its time!"

I approve your printing in manuscript, that is, not for the public, for who knows how long the public will be able, or be permitted to read? Bury a few copies against this Island is rediscovered. Some American versed in the old English language will translate it, and revive the true taste in gardening; though he will smile at the diminutive scenes on the little Thames when he is planting a forest on the banks of the Oronoko. I love to skip into futurity and imagine what will be done on the giant scale of a new hemisphere; but I am in little London, and must go and dress for a dinner with some of the inhabitants of that ancient metropolis, now in ruins, which was really for a moment the capital of a large empire, but the poor man who made it so, outlived himself and the duration of the empire.[4]

[1] 'Letters written by the late Right Honourable Lady Luxborough to William Shenstone, Esq. London: Printed for Dodsley,' 1775. 8vo. Lady Luxborough (died 1756) was the half-sister of the celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, and lived unhappily with her husband.—*See Graves's Recollections of Shenstone*, 12mo, 1788, p. 120. Shenstone characterises her Letters as "written with abundant ease, politeness, and vivacity; in which she was scarce equalled by any woman of her time."—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] I possess a copy of Lady Luxborough's Letters, with Walpole's MS. notes, and opposite to this passage he has written in the margin, "Excellent taste to admire the Scribleriad and Shenstone, and like Mr. Gray *very well*."—MITFORD.

[3] James Dodsley.—CUNNINGHAM.

[4] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Dec. 16, 1775.

I AM much entertained with the Newspaper account of the evidence of the three physicians before the House of Lords. I want to know whether it struck you in the same way. One talks of her Grace being in a kind of stupor, and at intervals much

1547. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Dec. 4, 1775.

I PERCEIVED I had not heard from your Ladyship for some time, but your silence would not have occasioned mine, if I had known anything worth telling you. I have not the talent of my brethren, the gazetteers, who always learn a sheet full of news, whether anything happens or not; but then they have a crop of debates. I believe nobody in London knows so little of what passes in Parliament as I do. Mr. Ackland had run his head against Charles Fox, a week before I heard of it. The town is beautified with fourscore

affected in her understanding; a second, of her being seemingly deprived of her recollection, and a third (her body physician) says that if she continue to mend as she had done the last twenty-four hours, she would soon be well enough, &c. Now this seems to me to be a description of a person in her cups, rather than in the palsy. If I am uncharitable in my censure pray check me, although the subject be the person who calls herself Duchess of Kingston, for even in this case I will kiss the rod.

I admire Mr. Cumberland's rudeness to you exceedingly, for to condemn Gray's Letters to you who had contributed so much to the collection, was worse than if he had condemned them to the editor. The editor might be excused in printing bad letters out of deference and respect to those who furnished him with them. The contributors to such a collection could have no such plea; but more than enough of this poor man: let him go on with his Sentimental Comedies. This anecdote shows he is qualified for the task, because it shows he can have no feeling. Taste in all cases is out of the question.

Pray is it certain that a great personage in his treaty for foreign troops styled himself Sovereign of the grand American empire? if it be, what an excellent moment he took for assuming such a title!

I have lately learned a very different doctrine about personal identity than Mr. Locke taught me at the University. He said, I think, that it consisted in consciousness of a man's knowing himself to be the same man to-day that he was yesterday, &c. Now I say it depends merely upon the alphabet. Every man has from his father and his godfather a certain quota of letters given him at his birth and his baptism, by which he is, what he is: let him but contrive to change these, and the coward of Minden becomes the secretary militant against America, and everybody instantly loses their recollection about him, as if they were in the same deplorable way with her Grace of Kingston—nay, I would wager that his own recollection is lost too. If this be not a complete change of identity, I know not what is; and yet it is all done by the power of the alphabet. Q. E. D.

I wish in your next favour, which I hope to have soon, you would be pleased to seal with a very clear impression of your antique Sacrifice, for I have been painting from a very bad one a figure in *chiaro oscuro* for one of my book presses, and I have succeeded so tolerably, that I think it will do when finished from a better original.

Lord Strafford left Yorkshire, I believe, yesterday, but I have heard that he had received, and was much pleased with your remembrance of him. We talked little about politics when I was with him, yet what I said of that sort (which was by no means of the neutral kind) did not seem to displease him. Believe me, dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

W. MASON.

knights, of new or old Scotia, in yellow ribbons, and yet I have not seen one of them. How should I see or know anything? I seldom stir out of my house before seven in the evening, see very few persons, and go to fewer places, make no new acquaintance, and have seen most of my old wear out. Loo at Princess Amelie's, loo at Lady Hertford's, are the capital events of my history, and a Sunday alone, at Strawberry, my chief entertainment. All this is far from gay; but as it neither gives me *ennui*, nor lowers my spirits, it is not uncomfortable, and I prefer it to being *déplacé* in younger company. My greatest objection is, that it often makes me a very unentertaining correspondent at Ampthill; but this is almost as dull a season of the year as autumn. I would promise it should mend after Christmas, but happily you will be in town then, and I shall pass my time more agreeably, and have no occasion to write.

I am very sorry Lady Holland is out of order; I hope not at all seriously, and that you have no occasion to be in the least alarmed. The sale at Holland House will produce treasures. I did not go; it would have been a horrid sight to me who have lived there so much, but I hear the most common furniture has sold as dear as relics.

There is another thing concerns me too,—Sir George Macartney's voyage to the government of the Grenades. There is nobody who is merely an acquaintance that I should regret more. He is extremely good-humoured, equal, conversable on all subjects, unaffected, and perfectly agreeable in great or small companies. Methinks it would be very just to write a 'North Briton' against Lord Bute for doing *so little* for his own son-in-law.

It is a little late in my letter to express my grief for your Ladyship's—what disorder? You have not told me, only that it is a sort of influenza; so I have a proportionate sort of concern. It would be very inconvenient to me to be much afflicted just now for any thing, for the King of Prussia is dying. I would venture to rejoice even if I were his subject, for a worse Dionysius cannot succeed.

Pray, Madam, tell the nymphs of Ampthill that if I had a spark of imagination left it should be at their service; but old people do nothing but tell old stories, far from inventing new. The only thing I would ever allow myself to write more, should be like Brantome; but as everybody's history in these days is written in Newspapers or Magazines, my trouble is luckily saved, and for anything else, it is a maxim of mine that old folks ought to do nothing

at all, for nothing becomes them. I am very strict to this rule, and, if I ever break it, set it down that I begin to dote.

Tuesday.

I have just sent to Lady Holland, who has had a good night, and is much better.

1548. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 8, 1775.

I HAVE received another kind letter from you, my dear Sir, about the Duke and Duchess [of Gloucester]. You are very good to inform me; for though the Duchess's daughters send me general accounts, I know nothing directly, having received but a single letter from her Royal Highness since they set out. I need not say to you, that I never had such an honour from the Duke. He, I do not doubt, is recovered, and will for some time be the better, as he was before, from so wholesome an illness. I cannot be so tranquil on her situation till after her delivery. The greatness of her courage makes her support conflicts; but, perhaps, women of less resolution, who abandon themselves to fears, undergo less struggles.

Your brother, I believe, is recovered, at least Mr. Croft thinks so. He is always lame, it is true, but his face still fresh and juvenile. You and I are wrinkled parchments to our elder brothers. They are Glastonbury thorns and bloom at their Christmas. I pretend to grow a little fatter, but every other winter unravels me like Penelope's web.

There is nothing new here, at least within the sphere of my knowledge. That circle is of slender extent, and does not intersect either that of the Court or the other of the Opposition: the secrets of neither reach me, who seek not to penetrate them. We have both martial and pacific symptoms. Commissaries are going with olive-branches, and Acts of Parliament and regiments with daggers and swords. We seem to enrage America, as if it were a passionate man who is very sorry the moment his passion is over. The House of Commons sits eternally, though half of the usual number are gone out of town.

I saw the Duchess of Beaufort the other night, who inquired much after you. You know her daughter [Lady Mary Somerset] is to marry Lord Granby.

Tell me truly, is or has the Gabrielli been a great singer? She

has, at least, not honoured us but with a most slender low voice. Her action is just, but colder than a Vestal's. However, as you know, she carries the resemblance no farther, and, consequently, is kept by a Mr. Piers, a very rich gentleman of Yorkshire, who is so profuse to her, that I suppose she will be more capricious than ever. We import superannuated syrens, and spoil them more than the Italians can afford to do, who at least enjoy them young.

That brave statue, Sir Charles Saunders,[1] died yesterday. The present war has not yet furnished us with any recruit of heroes. A civil war used to be prolific—Europe is very much worn out. It is America's turn to be fruitful of genius. The last comet of this hemisphere, the King of Prussia, is on its *return*. A wit of last century, when *conceits* were in fashion, would have said, that its blazing tail turned out, as some philosophers have held, to be water, for he is dying of a dropsy. I care not of what; the World will be delivered from one of its visitations. When Voltaire follows him, their meeting would make a good "Dialogue of the Dead."

I will not lengthen my letter when I have no more to say, for though we have an empire at each end of the world, and a war in both, they do not keep us in daily news; and, what is much stranger, their metropolis, London, stagnates; but it is generally so about Christmas and autumn: in February, March, April, and May, our pulses are very feverish.

1549. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 10, 1775.

I was very sorry to have been here, dear Sir, the day you called on me in town. It is so difficult to uncloister you, that I regret not seeing you when you are out of your own *ambry*. I have nothing new to tell you that is very old; but you can inform me of something within your own district. Who is the author, E. B. G.[2] of a version of Mr. Gray's Latin Odes into English, and of an Elegy on my wolf-devoured dog, poor Tory? a name you will marvel at in a dog of mine; but his godmother was the widow of Alderman Parsons, who gave him at Paris to Lord Conway, and he to me.

[1] Admiral and Knight of the Bath. He was remarkably taciturn.—Walpole.

[2] Edward Burnaby Greene, formerly of Bennet College, but at that time a brewer in Westminster. He likewise published translations of Pindar, Persius, Apollonius Rhodius, Anacreon, &c.—Wright

The author is a poet; but he makes me blush, for he calls Mr. Gray and me *congenial pair*. Alas! I have no genius; and if any symptom of talent, so inferior to Gray's, that Milton and Quarles might as well be coupled together. We rode over the Alps in the same chaise, but Pegasus drew on his side, and a cart-horse on mine. I am too jealous of his fame to let us be coupled together. This author says he has lately printed at Cambridge a Latin translation of the Bard; I should be much obliged to you for it.

I do not ask you if Cambridge has produced anything, for it never does. Have you made any discoveries? Has Mr. Lort? Where is he? Does Mr. Tyson engrave no more? My plates for Strawberry advance leisurely. I am about nothing. I grow old and lazy, and the present world cares for nothing but politics, and satisfies itself with writing in newspapers. If they are not bound up and preserved in libraries, posterity will imagine that the art of printing was gone out of use. Lord Hardwicke[1] has indeed reprinted his heavy volume of Sir Dudley Carleton's Despatches, and says I was in the wrong to despise it. I never met with anybody that thought otherwise. What signifies raising the dead so often, when they die the next minute? Adieu!

1550. TO THE COUNTESS OF AYLESBURY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 11, 1775.

Did you hear that scream?—Don't be frightened, Madam; it was only the Duchess of Kingston last Sunday was sevennight at chapel: but it is better to be prepared; for she has sent word to the House of Lords, that her nerves are so bad she intends to scream for these two months, and therefore they must put off her trial. They are to take her throes into consideration to-day; and that there may be sufficient room for the length of her veil and train, and attendants, have a mind to treat her with Westminster-hall. I hope so, for I should like to see this *comédie larmoyante;* and, besides, I conclude, it would bring your Ladyship to town. You shall have timely notice.

There is another comedy infinitely worth seeing—Monsieur Le Texier. He is Préville, and Caillaud, and Garrick, and Weston,

[1] Philip Yorke, second Earl of Hardwicke, when Lord Royston, published the "Letters to and from Sir Dudley Carleton, Knight, during his Embassy in Holland, from January, 1615-16, to December, 1620," 4to, 1727; and, in 1775, a second edition, 'with large additions to the Historical Preface.'—Wright.

and Mrs. Clive, all together; and as perfect in the most insignificant part, as in the most difficult.[1] To be sure, it is hard to give up loo in such fine weather, when one can play from morning till night. In London, Pam can scarce get a house till ten o'clock. If you happen to see the General, your husband, make my compliments to him, Madam; his friend the King of Prussia is going to the Devil and Alexander the Great.

1551. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, Dec. 14, 1775.

Our letters probably passed by each other on the road, for I wrote to you on Tuesday, and have this instant received one from you, which I answer directly, to beg pardon for my incivility, nay, ingratitude, in not thanking you for your present of a whole branch of most respectable ancestors, the *Derehaughs*—why, the *Derehaughs* alone would make gentlemen of half the modern peers, English or Irish. I doubt my journey to France was got into my head, and left no room for an additional quarter—but I have given it to Edmondson, and ordered him to take care that I am born again from the *Derehaughs*. This Edmondson has got a ridiculous notion into his head that another, and much ancienter of my progenitors, Sir Henry Walpole, married his wife Isabella Fitz-Osbert, when she was widow to Sir Walter Jernegan; whereas all the *Old Testament* says Sir Walter married Sir Henry's widow. Pray send me your authority to confound this gainsayer, if you know anything particular of the matter.

I had not heard of the painting you tell me of. As those boobies, the Society of Antiquaries, have gotten hold of it, I wonder their *piety* did not make them bury it again, as they did the clothes of Edward I.[2] I have some notion that in Vertue's MSS. or somewhere

[1] M. Le Texier was a native of Lyons, where he was directeur des fermes. Madame du Deffand, in a letter to Walpole, says of him —"Soyez sûr, que lui tout seul est la meilleure troupe que nous avons:" and again, in one to Voltaire — "Assis dans un fauteuil, avec un livre à la main, il joue les comédies où il y a sept, huit, dix, douze personnages, si parfaitement bien, qu'on ne saurait croire, même en le regardant, que ce soit le même homme qui parle. Pour moi, l'illusion est parfaite."—Wright.

[2] On the 2nd of May, 1774, the Society of Antiquaries opened (with permission) the tomb of Edward the First in Westminster Abbey. The body was found in perfect preservation, and most superbly attired. The garments were carefully replaced in the tomb.—Wright.—Compare vol. vi. p. 84.—Cunningham.

else, I don't know where, I have read of some ancient painting at the Rose Tavern. This I will tell *you*—but Mr. Gough is such a bear, that I shall not satisfy him about it. That Society, when they are puzzled, have recourse to me: and that would be so often, that I shall not encourage them. They may blunder as much as they please, from their heavy President [Milles] down to the pert Governor Pownall, who accounts for everything immediately, before the Creation or since. Say only to Mr. Gough, that I said I had not leisure now to examine Vertue's MSS. If I find anything there, *you* shall know—but I have no longer any eagerness to communicate what I discover. When there was so little taste for MSS. which Mr. Gray thought worth transcribing, and which were so valuable, would one offer more pearls?

Boydell[1] brought me this morning another number of the Prints from the pictures at Houghton. Two or three in particular are most admirably executed—but alas! it will be twenty years before the set is completed. That is too long to look forward to at any age!—and at mine!—nay, people will be tired in a quarter of the time. Boydell, who knows this country, and still more this town, thinks so, too. Perhaps there will be newer, or at least more fashionable ways of engraving, and the old will be despised—or, which is still more likely, nobody will be able to afford the expense. Who would lay a plan for anything in an overgrown metropolis hurrying to its fall?

I will return you Mr. Gough's letter when I get a frank. Adieu!

1552. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 17, 1775.

I AM afraid the Pope will be shocked: matters go very ill with his friend the Duchess of Kingston. She pretended to teaze the House of Lords for her trial, though privately soliciting against it. Lord Mansfield entered the lists as her knight; and contended for a private hearing in the chamber of Parliament; and treated the affair very lightly. This revolted the Chancellor [Bathurst]; and he drew her failings in very ungentle colours. A committee was appointed to examine precedents. Her Grace was alarmed; went to St. James's Chapel at eight in the morning; and was delivered of a

[1] The famous Alderman and print-seller of London.—CUNNINGHAM.

scream that roused all the Palace. The obdurate Lords' Committees proceeded. The tide was turned; and everybody spoke all they knew: collusion between the Duchess and Lord Bristol, to impose on the Ecclesiastical Court; money taken by the Earl; perjury on both sides; the register of their marriage torn out, which is felony! a new certificate said to be forged: in short, nothing but a trial in Westminster-hall could satisfy justice and the public. Screams now ripened to madness; and the Duchess begged a respite for two months. That was pretty long. Her physicians were sent for. Three appeared: and, though they would not, as she desired, say that she would be mad for two months, they did allow that she is troubled with a great alienation of mind: in proof of which she has written to the King, to remind him of his grandfather's and his own goodness to her; hoping he would not abandon her in her distress; and begging a *noli prosequi;* which his Majesty will not grant her. The Committee went on; and have decided that she shall be tried in Westminster-hall: and Lord Lyttelton, as bashful as herself, said, that, as she could not pretend to chastity or modesty, there was no room for compassion. This hopeful young man, who, on being refused a place, spoke *for* the Americans; and, in two days, on getting one, *against* them, being reproached with such precipitate changes, said, that, with his fortune, nobody could suppose he thought of the value of the salary.

What this heroic lady will attempt next is very unknown. If she decamps, outlawry and forfeitures follow. Laudanum she had recourse to formerly on an emergency. If she adheres to frenzy she must retire to a mad-house. If she braves her fate, I shall not wonder if she escapes. A fair one, more artful, but not of so high rank, nor patronised by a chief justice, has just foiled the law; though nobody questions her guilt. This is a Mrs. Margaret Caroline Rudd; whose history would make as large a volume as Madame de Kingston's. She sent her lawyer a brief of which he could not make head or tail. He went to her for one more clear: "And do you imagine," said she, "that I will trust you, or any attorney in England, with the truth of my story? Take your brief; meet me in the Old Bailey, and I will ask you the necessary questions." At her trial, she did write sixty notes to him, with such artful interrogatories, that she was acquitted; and the whole Court shouted with applause. I must tell you one more anecdote of Mrs. Rudd. Preparatory to her trial, she sent for some brocaded silks to a mercer; she pitched on a rich one, and ordered him to cut off the proper

quantity: but the mercer, reflecting that if she were hanged, as was probable, he should never be paid, pretended he had no scissors; but would carry home the piece, cut off what she wanted, and send it to Newgate. She saw his apprehension; pulled out her pocket-book; and, giving him a bank-note of twenty pounds, said, "There is a pair of scissors." Such quickness is worth an hundred screams. We have no Joans of Arc, nor Catharines de' Medici; but this age has heroines after its own fashion: ay, and heroes too. *Arts and sciences have* not only *travelled west*, but north, too. Prodigious crimes can flourish in the most rigorous climates. Except poisoning the last Pope, Rome itself, the soil of Neros and Borgias, has not produced a murder worth sixpence these two hundred years. Atrocious genius is got to Berlin and Petersburg. In two or three centuries, I suppose, there will be some horrible metropolis beyond the Atlantic, or under the South Pole: and, as the press disperses *useful* precedents, two or three kings and queens will find it suits their convenience to divide some territory, to which they have no title, near the Straits of Magellan.

1553. TO THOMAS ASTLE, ESQ.[1]

SIR, *Dec.* 19, 1775.

I AM much obliged, and return you my thanks for the paper you have sent me. You have added a question to it, which, if I understand it, you yourself, Sir, are more capable than anybody of answering. You say, "Is it possible that this instrument was framed by Richard Duke of Gloucester?" If by *framed* you mean drawn up, I should think princes of the blood, in that barbarous age, were not very expert in drawing acts of attainder, though a branch of the law more in use then than since. But as I suppose you mean *forged*, you, Sir, so conversant in writings of that age, can judge better than any man. You may only mean *forged by his order*. Your reading, much deeper than mine, may furnish you with precedents of *forged acts of attainder:* I never heard of one; nor does my simple understanding suggest the use of such a forgery, on cases immediately pressing; because an act of attainder being a matter of public notoriety, it would be revolting to the common sense of all mankind to plead such

[1] Thomas Astle, Keeper of the Records in the Tower; died 1803. His library is now a part of the Library of the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street.—CUNNINGHAM.

an one, if it had not really existed. If it could be carried into execution by force, the force would avail without the forgery, and would be at once exaggerated and weakened by it. I cannot, therefore, conceive why Richard should make use of so absurd a trick, unless that having so little to do in so short and turbulent a reign, he amused himself with treasuring up in the Tower a forged act for the satisfaction of those who, three hundred years afterwards, should be glad of discovering new flaws in his character. As there are men so bigoted to old legends, I am persuaded, Sir, that you would please them by communicating your Question to them. They would rejoice to suppose that Richard was more criminal than even the Lancastrian historians represent him; and just at this moment I don't know whether they would not believe that Mrs. Rudd assisted him. I, who am, probably, as absurd a bigot on the other side, see nothing in the paper you have sent me, but a confirmation of Richard's innocence of the death of Clarence. As the Duke of Buckingham was appointed to superintend the execution, it is incredible that he should have been drowned in a butt of malmsey, and that Richard should have been the executioner. When a seneschal of England, or, as we call it a Lord High Steward, is appointed for a trial, at least for execution, with all his officers, it looks very much as if, even in that age, proceedings were carried on with a little more formality than the careless writers of that time let us think. The appointment, too, of the Duke of Buckingham for that office, seems to add another improbability (and a work of supererogation) to Richard's forging the instrument. Did Richard really do nothing but what tended to increase his unpopularity by glutting mankind with lies, forgeries, and absurdities, which every man living could detect?

I take this opportunity, Sir, of telling you how sorry I am not to have seen you long [*sic*], and how glad I shall be to renew our acquaintance, especially if you like to talk over this old story with me, though I own it is of little importance, and pretty well exhausted.[1] I am, Sir, with great regard, your obliged humble servant.

[1] To the above letter it was intended to subjoin the following queries:—

"If there was no such Parliament held, would Richard have dared to forge an act for it?

"Would Henry VII. never have reproached him with so absurd a forgery?

"Did neither Sir T. More nor Lord Bacon ever hear of that forgery?

"As Richard declared his nephew the Earl of Warwick his successor, would he have done so if he had forged an act of attainder of Warwick's father?

"If it is supposed he forged the act, when he set aside Warwick, could he pretend that act was not known when he declared him his heir? Would not so recent an act's

1554. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Dec. 20, 1775.

I COULD not write sooner, Madam, for though I certainly have as little real business as any Christian in England, so it happens that nobody is more employed. On Monday and Tuesday I wrote eight letters, and one of them was of seven pages; but it was a letter that I hope will save me a vast many. Sir Horace Mann's elder brother is dead, the estate comes to him, and I flatter myself that a regular correspondence of thirty-four years will cease, and that I shall see him again before we meet in the Elysian fields. Antiquaries write to me too. I hoped I had done with them, but they are *still harping on my daughter,*—the old story, 'Richard the Third.' I laugh at them as civilly as I can, yet they return to the charge. Then I am mighty busy about Mariette's sale, where I have been so lucky as to ruin myself. I have got Madame d'Olonne; Madame du Deffand says I have paid dearer for her than any of her lovers did in her lifetime. Item: a little bust of Nic. Poussin's wife by him in *terra cotta,* and a book of portraits in the reigns of Francis I. and Henry II., that belonged to Brantome, who has written the names; and among them is Diane de Valentinois. It is droll that even Madame d'Olonne is *en Diane.* A few days before the sale, the King of France offered 300,000 livres for the whole collection: it was refused, and has not produced so much, though my correspondent, the auctioneer, says everything sold for three times what it was worth. You may imagine, Madam, I shall be in a fine taking till my old concubines arrive.

You ask me what I think of the Earl of F—— and the Irish Baroness? I answer, nothing; for I don't know who they are, unless they are Lord Farnham and Lady Clermont; and then I shall ask why they have stayed fifty years before they thought of one another? For the other Irish baroness, Lady Luxborough, she

being unknown have proved it a forgery; and if there had been no such Parliament as that which forged it, would not that have proved it a double forgery? The act, therefore, and the Parliament that passed it, must have been genuine, and existed, though no other record appears. The distractions of the times, the evident insufficiency or partiality of the historians of that age, and the interest of Henry VII. to destroy all records that gave authority to the house of York and their title, account for our wanting evidence of that Parliament."

had a mishap with Parson Dalton, the reviver of 'Comus,' and retired to a hermitage on Parnassus, as she says herself. The seraphic Duchess,[1] her friend was suspected to have *chassé sur les mêmes terres*, and so it is no wonder they were intimate as they agreed *in eodem tertio*.

You ask me another question that I wish I could answer to my own satisfaction, and as gratefully as your Ladyship's goodness deserves: why I should not come to Ampthill this Christmas? I might plead, if I wished only for a decent excuse, that I have promised, if I go anywhere, to go to Park-place; or that Mr. Mann's death detains me, for he held our place [in the Customs] for Sir Edward and me, and there is much to settle. But, alas! there is a worse reason: I am not young enough to fly about in dark cold days, and have an inward foe, whom I dare not provoke and rouse; and who, if in one of his moods, would make me as tiresome to my hosts as to myself. In one's latter days one must take care not to give one's friends anything but one's best moments, and yet, I don't know but with all my prudent maxims, I may venture to come to you for a day or two. I have a vast mind, and a colt's tooth I see the discreetest of us never sheds. Don't expect me; but Lord knows what may happen!

The newspapers, as soon as I could have done, told you what a fib the Gazette told about Canada on Saturday night. Faces, that are generally pretty round, lengthened to their shoe-strings on Sunday. By Monday evening the Cabinet determined to—seem to recover their spirits, and so though they believed every tittle of the intelligence, they pretend not to believe a word of it. Lady Mary Coke, who is in no secrets, declaimed on the misfortune at Princess Amelie's, and said how dreadful it was for people to fall into the hands of people who tear people's eyes out! I smiled: she grew more incensed, and said she was sure I was glad. I said, I was comforted, as I heard they put people's eyes in again; at least, I concluded so, as nobody has returned without his eyes. In good truth, I think we are pulling out our own eyes, and nobody seems to have a nostrum for putting them in again.

The Duchess cannot be tried till February, for it is recollected that Westminster-hall is a common into which all sorts of cattle must be admitted in term-time. Lady Luxborough has exhausted all artful conclusions of letters, so I will never more be your Ladyship's most devoted.

[1] The Duchess of Somerset, Frances Thynn.—CUNNINGHAM.

P.S. They say Mrs. Rudd has been at the play in Lord Lyttelton's chariot. If the Duchess is acquitted, I suppose he will take her into keeping too, to show he is convinced of *her* virtue also, and wronged her innocence.

1555. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Dec. 21, 1775.

I SHALL make the impression of the seal to this letter as perfect as I can; yet probably it will ill answer your purpose, for it is only one of Wedgwood's antiques, and they are not very sharp; you exercise, I find, all your various talents, but the one I love the best *in you.* I should not say so much to everybody: a thousand pictures give me pleasure for one poem.

Foote and you agree in convicting the Duchess of ebriety, and you both prove it equally well in different ways. Nay, she seems to allow it herself, for she abandons insanity; intends, I hear, to rest her safety on pleading guilty, lest standing on her spotless innocence should drag to light too many crimes. Lord Mansfield has added one more to his own list; his shameless protection of her.

I never heard of the imperial title you mention, nor believe it, indeed I know of no treaty. That foreign troops have been treated for, is certain; if any are obtained, I am not in the secret. In the mean time the empire is shrunk to as narrow limits as that of the Holy Roman empire; which when it had nothing left but one eagle made it into two, by splitting it, as cooks serve a pigeon. By this time Canada probably is no part of the imperial dominions; unless Lord Dunmore has transported it on board his own government and ship, where he pretends to have imprisoned one of the provincial deputies, who to-day's papers say never existed—unless by your hypothesis of alphabetic identity, one man may become another. That many men do become other men, I see every day, and so entirely other men, that they retain none of the blushing shame of their original nymphood, when they become butterflies.

I felt Mr. Cumberland's folly so much, that his impertinence was lost on me. He has written an Ode, as he modestly calls it, in praise of Gray's Odes; charitably no doubt to make the latter taken notice of. Garrick read it the other night at Mr. Beauclerk's, who comprehended so little what it was about, that he desired Garrick to read it backwards, and try if it would not be equally good; he

did, and it was. I came in just afterwards; and the conversation continuing, Garrick said, with all the candour he could affect, "I wonder at it, but people cry down Mr. Mason's Life of Gray extremely; I really think it very ingenious." I made him no more answer than he deserved. I broke through this rule two days ago on a new impertinence to myself. In the Paper Office there is a wight, called Thomas Astle, who lives like moths on old parchments. It was he who lent me the Coronation Roll, and to whom I communicated my book on 'Richard III.,' to every tittle of which he agreed. Some of the moths his *commensales* remonstrated to him I suppose, that he had fouled his own chrysalis by helping to unravel an intricate web. From that time I never saw him; on Monday he sent me a printed copy of the act of attainder of George, Duke of Clarence (which corroborates remarkably one of my arguments), but which he not perceiving, very impertinently added a quære, which implied I had been in the wrong. The quære itself was so absurd that I could not deny myself the pleasure of laughing at him and his council. I send you a copy of my letter[1] as the shortest way of explaining what I have told you, and because I conclude the foolish Society of Antiquaries will be convinced he had guessed happily, and that we shall have a new dissertation against me in the next volume of the *old women's logic*, as I call the Archæologia. I have reserved two or three more arguments, with which they shall be treated if they do attack me again, but with which I would not trust Astle, lest any one of the body should have sense enough to see their folly and stop them. You must excuse me, but some time or other I am determined to publish all my Answers. I am offended for the honour of Richard's understanding, that all they charge him with tends to represent him as a drivelling fool, though indeed such are their understandings that they mean to prove he was an able knave.

Fools! yes, I think all the world is turned fool, or was born so; *cette tete à perruque*, that wig-block the Chancellor, what do you think he has done? Burnt all his father's correspondence with Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, &c.—why do you think? because several of the letters were indiscreet.[2] To be sure he thought they would

[1] No. 1553 of this edition.—Cunningham.

[2] Lord Chancellor Bathurst did not destroy *all* his father's unpublished correspondence with Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, &c.; for the present Lord Bathurst still possesses many of the first peer's papers, including some curious letters (which I have read) from Pope, Swift, &c.—Cunningham.

go and publish themselves, if not burnt, but indeed I suspect the indiscretion was that there were some truths which it was not proper to preserve, considering *considerandis*. That is just what I should like to have seen. There was otherwise so much discretion, and so little of any thing else except hypocrisy in all the letters of those men that have appeared, that I should not so much regret what discreet folly has now burnt. *Apropos*, did I ever tell you a most admirable *bon-mot* of Mr. Bentley? He was talking to me of an old devout Lady St. John, who burnt a whole trunk of letters of the famous Lord Rochester, "for which," said Mr. Bentley, "her soul is now burning in Heaven." The oddness, confusion, and wit of the idea struck me of all things. I wish you, good night.

1556. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 26, 1775.

It was very vexatious to be delivered from my own anxiety about you on Saturday last, and not to be able to remove your suspense till Tuesday. I hope, however, that the conclusion of my last week's letter diminished your apprehensions of being wronged. I now confirm you in, and invest you with, your own estate. Linton is yours, and you are now your own master; I say nothing of particulars; there are few, and Mr. Croft[1] tells you them.

If you have been impatient for this letter, how anxious must I be too for your answer to my last! But you cannot hesitate to take possession of your estate, to see your country again after an absence of forty years, to see a sister you love, and friends I think you love too. Why do I doubt? I will not—I will flatter myself that you will fix here. Such long, faithful, and laborious services as yours cannot remain unrewarded. Sir James Porter,[2] not so ancient a servant as you, has a pension of 1000*l.* a year. Lord Sandwich and Mr. Mackenzie have always been your protectors; and if you have not made many other friends, never were amiable qualities so thrown away for forty years together—but what the deuce am I doing! Why do I doubt your coming?

Since I wrote last, public affairs are grown much more serious, and unpromising of any good issue. General Carleton has been

[1] The Solicitor employed.—Walpole.
[2] Who had been Minister at Constantinople.—Walpole.

beaten by the provincials, St. John has surrendered to them, Quebec has probably fallen into their hands, with the whole province of Canada. You may call your neighbour the Pope ungrateful, for the Canadians joined the provincials. All this is certain; the rest seems to be credited; that our ships are destroying all the towns on the coast. This is horrible! and that the King's army could not stay in Boston, but was meditating retreat to Halifax. I don't at all warrant the last article of the bill of fare; but I may well say I see no prospect of good. Seeds of the last inveteracy sown! a whole continent to be reconquered! What lives, what money to be squandered! What damages, what breaches to be repaired! And reconciliation, how to be effected? by victories on our side, or on theirs? France is straining every nerve to repair their losses; we, every one to weaken ourselves; and weak we are to such a degree, that I hope France does not know it. Come and see us before it is worse.

The King referred to the Attorney-General the Duchess of Kingston's petition for a *noli prosequi*, and it was argued at the chambers of the Attorney. How many counsel do you think she had retained for that single preliminary?—a mob—only fourteen. She must be in a mortal panic; and the *noli prosequi* will not be granted. She has resumed her senses. The trial is fixed for the end of February. Madam of Babylon[1] and her Canadians are not in good odour; nay, I should not wonder if, like Jane Shore's friend Mrs. Blagrave, the old harlot should appropriate the entrusted jewels to her own use, when the Duchess is standing in a white sheet.

My last letter was so voluminous that it must compensate for this. How I long to have our correspondence finish! Your next, I conclude, will mention the passage of the Duke and Duchess [of Gloucester] through Florence. Adieu!

1557. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Dec. 27, 1775.

Fresh, very fresh news! General Carleton is not come, but General Burgoyne is, though not yet landed in town. He is to

[1] The Pope, in whose custody the Duchess of Kingston was said to have left her valuable effects at Rome.—Walpole.

bring very good accounts from Boston; but as he does not yet know what till he is told by those he is to tell, and as I am too scrupulous to send any news before it is born, you will excuse my mentioning the particulars.

We believe Quebec is perfectly safe, though we know to the contrary. Adam Smith told us t'other night at Beauclerk's, that Major Preston, one of two, but he is not sure which, would have been an excellent commander some years hence if he had seen any service. I said it was pity the war had not been put off till the Major should be some years older.

Lord Granby was married last night. He is selling an estate of 3000*l.* a year that came to him by his mother, to pay his father's debts. I am afraid he will never sell himself.

Here are some verses[1] of Soame Jenyns, that, in our present want of comfort, we admire very much, for we are out of spirits, and so was the poet, too, when he wrote the last stanza, which is insufferably bad. Pray return the piece, for I have no copy, and my amanuensis is in the country. There are some better verses by Dean Barnard, of which I will procure a copy if I can.[2] They are an answer to a gross brutality of Dr. Johnson, to which a properer answer would have been to fling a glass of wine in his face. I have no patience with an unfortunate monster trusting to his helpless deformity for indemnity for any impertinence that his arrogance suggests, and who thinks that what he has read is an excuse for everything he says.

I told you, Madam, I might be busy if I would. I am so whether I will or not. The absence of Sir Horace Mann has embarrassed me, as he is not here to be admitted to the place which his brother held by patent for my brother and me. It involves me with the Treasury, but as I am the most respectful and cheapest person they can deal with, I have submitted everything to them, and only begged they will give me nothing for my pains,—which will content me at least. I shall go to Strawberry to-morrow, unless I hear their pleasure; and have told Mr. Fitzpatrick that I think of meeting him next week at Ampthill; but I don't tell your Ladyship so, for indeed I know nothing of the matter.

Just at present I suppose I am the vainest creature in the universe. Lady Di. has drawn three scenes of my tragedy, which

[1] The verses are not with the letter.—R. Vernon Smith.

[2] See the brutality and the verses in Miss Reynolds's 'Recollections':—Appendix to Croker's edition of 'Boswell.'—Cunningham.

if the subject were a quarter as good as the drawings, would make me a greater genius than Shakspeare, as she is superior to Guido and Salvator Rosa. Such figures! such dignity! such simplicity! Then there is a cedar hanging over the castle, that is more romantic than when it grew on Lebanon!

Oh! if Lord Ossory has a farthing in the world to spare, he may buy a Madonna and Child, by Vandyke, at Christie's, for four thousand guineas, for which I would not give four hundred if I were as rich as General Scott. It is a fine picture, and yet I believe Vandyke was the father no more than Joseph.

1558. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Jan. 26, 1776.

I HAVE deferred answering your last letter, dear Sir, till I cannot answer with my own hand. I made a pilgrimage at Christmas to Queen's Cross, at Ampthill, was caught there by the snow, imprisoned there for a fortnight, and sent home bound hand and foot by the gout. The pain, I suppose, is quite frozen, for I have had none; nothing but inflammation and swelling, and they abate. In reality, this is owing to the bootikins, which, though they do not cure the gout, take out its sting. You, who are still more apt to be an invalid, feel, I fear, this Hyperborean season; I should be glad to hear you did not.

I thought I had at once jumped upon a discovery of the subject of the painted room at the Rose Tavern, but shall not plume myself upon my luck till I have seen the chamber, because Mr. Gough's account seems to date the style of the painting earlier than will serve my hypothesis. I had no data to go upon but the site having belonged to the family of Tufton (for I do not think the description at all answers to the taking of Francis I., nor is it at all credible that there should be arms in the painting, and yet neither those of France or Austria). I turned immediately to Lord Thanet's pedigree, in Collins's 'Peerage,' and found at once an heroic adventure performed by one of the family, that accords remarkably with the principal circumstance. It is the rescue of the Elector Palatine (son of our Queen of Bohemia) from an ambuscade laid for him by the Duke of Lorrain. The arms, Or and Gules, I thought were those of Lorrain, which I since find are Argent and Gules. The Argent indeed may be turned yellow by age, as Mr. Gough says he

does not know whether the crescent is red or black. But the great impediment is, that this achievement of a Tufton was performed in the reign of Charles II. Now in that reign, when we were become singularly ignorant of chivalry, anachronisms and blunders might easily be committed by a modern painter; yet I shall not adhere to my discovery, unless I find the painting correspond with the style of the modern time to which I would assign it; nor will I see through the eyes of hypothesis, but fairly.

I shall now turn to another subject. Mr. Astle, who has left me off ever since the fatal era of Richard III. for no reason that I can conceive but my having adopted his discovery, which for aught I know may be a reason with an antiquary, lately sent me the attainder of George Duke of Clarence, which he has found in the Tower and printed; and on it, as rather glad to confute me and himself, than to have found a curiosity, he had written two or three questions which tended to accuse Richard of having forged the instrument, though to the instrument itself is added another, which confirms my acquittal of Richard of the murder of Clarence. But, alas! passion is a spying-glass that does but make the eyes of folly more blind.

I sent him an answer, a copy of which I enclose. Since that, I have heard no more of him, nor shall, I suppose, till I see this new proof of Richard's guilt adopted into the annals of the Society, against which I have reserved some other stigmas for it.

Mr. Edmondson has found a confirmation of Isabella Fitz-Osbert having married Jernegan after Walpole. I forget where I found my arms of the Fitz-Osberts. Though they differ from yours of Sir Roger, the colours are the same, and they agree with yours of William Fitz-Osborne. There was no accuracy in spelling names even till much later ages; and you know that different branches of the same family made little variation in their coats.

I am very sorry for the death of poor Henshaw, of which I had not heard. I am yours most sincerely.

P.S. The queries added to the letter to Mr. Astle were not sent with it; and, as I reserve them for a future answer, I beg you will show them to nobody.

1559. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Jan. 28, 1776

I AM in so much haste now to have our correspondence end, that I no longer love even to write you a letter. My impatience to hear that you think of coming over, is extreme—think of it!—I mean, to hear that you have fixed the time. Surely you can think of nothing else. Old Knight, the cashier,[1] used to come once a year to Calais to look at the cliffs of England. You are not banished, as he was, but have been much longer absent. I will forgive any imprudence of impetuosity to come; take care I hear of no coldness. I am almost afraid to frighten you with an account of our winter; but then it is such a winter as I never saw. I was with you at Florence in 1741, and those ever since have been springs, and sometimes summers. This was made for the North Pole, has lasted three weeks, and grows every day worse and worse. It caught me at Lord Ossory's, in Bedfordshire, and locked me up there above a fortnight. At last it gave me the gout in both hands, on which I set out directly for London through mountains of snow and quarries of ice. I am still confined, though I have had very little pain; yet I write with difficulty, and ill-humour too, for I expected no gout this year.

By your silence, though you mention them at Rome, I find their Royal Highnesses my nephew and niece did not pass through Florence, for which I am not sorry. I have had a letter from the Duchess, who tells me the Pope has been a perfect knight-errant in courtesy and gallantry, and enjoined all manner of attentions to them from his college and nobility. It is not he that sent it to me, but I have had a red hat given to me to-day—it was Cardinal Wolsey's.[2] I am impatient to hear the result of Lady Orford's audience. I did not imagine she would ask it, as she was not content with the Duke[3] when he was last at Florence: I suppose she is proud of her *nepotism*.

[1] Robert Knight, Cashier of the South-Sea Company in the memorable year 1720. His son was created [1746] Lord Luxborough, and afterwards [1763] Earl of Catherlogh, and had an only son, who died before him, without issue.—WALPOLE. See note on Letter to Mann, June 26, 1747.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] The red hat (thought to be a masqueing-hat) bought at the Strawberry Hill Sale in 1842, by Mr. Charles Kean, for 21*l.*—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] The Duke of Gloucester.—WALPOLE.

The trial of the late Pope's friend, the Duchess of Kingston, is put off till April.

The Government is straining every nerve to muster a great army in America, though it must combat for its very landing. Fifteen thousand Hessians and Brunswickers are retained. This force, if half of it can get thither and land, must be maintained from hence. We are not apt to be frugal about our armies abroad. Guess at the millions this will cost; and come and see your country before all its splendour is at an end! Boston is famishing: what is the fate of Quebec, we do not yet know. The Parliament is met, but two-thirds of the members are frozen in the country. Omiah, the native of Otaheite,[1] breakfasted with Mr. Conway to-day, and learns to skate. He had no notion of ice, and calls it *stone-water;* a very good expression. If he were in Ireland they would advise him to carry over some in spirits.

Shall you bring over a great many fine things for Linton? Shall you not regret all you have given to me? I would give them up to have you here. Don't you invite me to Linton? How long your letter is coming! Take care to know me when you see me. Expect me as wrinkled as Methuselah. Pray don't impute the change to thirty-five years and a tolerable quantity of gout, but to this hard winter. I assure you I looked charmingly a month ago. I have some spirits left still, and I wish I don't behave like a boy when we meet.

1560. TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

[*Feb.* 1776.]

Mr. Walpole cannot express how much he is obliged to Mr. Gibbon for the valuable present he has received;[2] nor how great a comfort it is to him, in his present situation, in which he little expected to receive singular pleasure. Mr. Walpole does not say this at random, nor from mere confidence in the author's abilities, for he has already (all his weakness would permit) read the first chapter, and it is in the greatest admiration of the style, manner, method, clearness, and intelligence. Mr. Walpole's impatience to proceed will struggle with his disorder, and give him such spirits,

[1] There is a fine portrait of Omiah by Sir Joshua.—Cunningham.

[2] The first volume of the 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'—Wright.

that he flatters himself he shall owe part of his recovery to Mr. Gibbon; whom, as soon as that is a little effected, he shall beg the honour of seeing.

1561. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

DEAR SIR: *Arlington Street, Feb.* 6, [1776.]

I SEND you word as soon as I can that I received your charming letter very safely, but that is all I can do or say; and God knows when I shall be able to send you any other answer, for I am, and have been this week, confined to my bed with the gout in six or seven different places. As I never had it before in my leap year, I would suppose that it is owing now to the late bitter weather, for you see that even in my condition one can be fool enough to flatter oneself with some straw to the last. Adieu! I heartily wish you all I want, without envying you what I want.

Yours ever,
H. W.[1]

1562. TO EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

Feb. 14, 1776.

AFTER the singular pleasure of reading you, Sir, the next satisfaction is to declare my admiration. I have read great part of your volume, and cannot decide to which of its various merits I give the preference, though I have no doubt of assigning my partiality to one virtue of the author, which, seldom as I meet with it, always strikes me superiorly. Its quality will naturally prevent your guessing which I mean. It is your amiable modesty. How can you know

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR: *York, Feb.* 15, 1776.

I WAS extremely sorry to receive an answer to my last written by your amanuensis, yet I beg you would employ him immediately again, just to tell me how you do, if you are not by this time able to use your own hand, which I heartily hope may be the case. As to this very troublesome and unwelcome guest visiting you a year sooner than you expected him, I can easily account for that from the late severe weather, especially when I consider that had it been twice as severe it would never have prompted you to button a single button the closer. I most cordially wish for a good account of you soon, and am, dear Sir,

Most truly yours,
W. MASON.

so much, judge so well, possess your subject, and your knowledge, and your power of judicious reflection so thoroughly, and yet command yourself and betray no dictatorial arrogance of decision? How unlike very ancient and very modern authors! You have, unexpectedly, given the world a classic history. The fame it must acquire will tend every day to acquit this panegyric of flattery. The impressions it has made on me are very numerous. The strongest is the thirst of being better acquainted with you; but I reflect that I have been a trifling author, and am in no light profound enough to deserve your intimacy, except by confessing your superiority so frankly, that I assure you honestly, I already feel no envy, though I did for a moment. The best proof I can give you of my sincerity, is to exhort you, warmly and earnestly, to go on with your noble work: the strongest, though a presumptuous mark of my friendship, is to warn you never to let your charming modesty be corrupted by the acclamations your talents will receive. The native qualities of the man should never be sacrificed to those of the author, however shining. I take this liberty as an older man, which reminds me how little I dare promise myself that I shall see your work completed! But I love posterity enough to contribute, if I can, to give them pleasure through you.

I am too weak to say more, though I could talk for hours on your History. But one feeling I cannot suppress, though it is a sensation of vanity. I think, nay, I am sure I perceive, that your sentiments on government agree with my own. It is the only point on which I suspect myself of any partiality in my admiration. It is a reflection of a far inferior vanity that pleases me in your speaking with so much distinction of that, alas! wonderful period, in which the world saw five good monarchs succeed each other.[1] I have often thought of treating that Elysian era. Happily it has fallen into better hands!

I have been able to rise to-day, for the first time, and flatter myself that if I have no relapse, you will in two or three days more give me leave, Sir, to ask the honour of seeing you. In the mean time, be just; and do not suspect me of flattering you. You will always hear that I say the same of you to everybody. I am, with the greatest regard, Sir, &c.

[1] Walpole, in August 1771, had said, "The world will no more see Athens, Rome, and the Medici again, than a succession of five good Emperors, like Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines."—WRIGHT.

1563. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 15, 1776

You have chilled me so thoroughly by the coldness of your answer, and by the dislike you express to England, that I shall certainly press you no more to come. I thought at least it would have cost you a struggle.

I have kept my bed for a fortnight with the gout in my limbs, and yesterday was the first of my rising; but it was after a sleep of eleven hours, which shows how excellent my constitution would be, if not harassed by the gout. I bear that affliction with patience —with patience, which my reflection has taught me is *the desperate substitute to Hope*, and which does not delude one with charming visions!

The Duke of Gloucester did me the honour of notifying to me the birth of his son. It was most welcome intelligence, and saved me a month's anxiety for the Duchess, who I thought was likely to go a fortnight longer.

We have no news but those of preparations against America. I can add nothing to what you know I think on that subject.

Monsieur de Guisnes has been suddenly recalled—it is said on a successful cabal of his enemies; which, if so, bodes his total ruin. As his successor is not appointed, and there is a great armament at Toulon (though said to assist the Spaniards against Algiers) the Stocks took fright, and expressed it: I don't know whether with reason; but can their panic be extremely premature? There is talk of Lord Stormont leaving his embassy for a post in Scotland, and of Sir Joseph Yorke replacing him at Paris.

Lady Mary Coke has returned some services at Paris, and many years of great attentions, with singular rudeness to me, since my return—but she is mad; and I suppose the birth of the Prince at Rome[1] will send her to Bedlam. Adieu! The accounts from Rome continue good.

[1] The Duke of Gloucester's son. Lady Mary had been in love with the Duke of York.—CUNNINGHAM.

1564. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 18, 1776.

As my illness prevented my answering your delightful letter, I do not see why the leisure and solitude of convalescence should not be employed in replying to it; not poetically, for the current of the blood, frozen by age and chalkstoned by the gout, does not, though loosened from disease, flow over the smooth pebbles of Helicon. Mine, at best, were factitious rills that, like the artificial cascatelle of Hagley, played for moments to entertain visitors, and were not the natural bounty of the soil. *You* are forced to restrain your torrent, and the dykes of prudence must be borne down before it overflows the country. Not so Mr. Anstey; because his muddy mill-pool had in one point of view the roar and lustre of a cascade when it fell over a proper wheel, he thinks every pailful of its water, though soused down by a ploughman, has the same effect. His 'Somersetshire Dialogue' is stupidity itself; you described it prophetically before you saw it.

Somebody or other has given us an epistle of another kind by the late Lord Melcombe;—not different from having more meaning, for Phœbus knows it has none at all, but so civil, so harmless, and so harmonious, that it is the ghost of one of Pope's tunes. How the puffy Peer must have sweated when learning to sing of Pope, whom he could have strangled! The whole and sole drift of this cantata is to call Lord Bute 'Pollio,' and to beg to be his vicegerent upon earth. I should like to have heard Lord Bute asking Sir Harry Erskine who 'Pollio' was.

Mr. Whitehead has just published a pretty poem called 'Variety,' in which there is humour and ingenuity, but not more poetry than is necessary for a Laureate; however, the plan is one, and is well wound up. I now pass to prose.

Lo, there is just appeared a truly classic work: a history, not majestic like Livy, nor compressed like Tacitus; not stamped with character like Clarendon; perhaps not so deep as Robertson's 'Scotland,' but a thousand degrees above his 'Charles;' not pointed like Voltaire, but as accurate as he is inexact; modest as he is *tranchant* and sly as Montesquieu without being so *recherché*. The style is as smooth as a Flemish picture, and the muscles are concealed and only for natural uses, not exaggerated like Michael Angelo's to show

the painter's skill in anatomy; nor composed of the limbs of clowns of different nations, like Dr. Johnson's heterogeneous monsters. This book is Mr. Gibbon's 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' He is son of a foolish alderman,[1] is a Member of Parliament, and called a whimsical one because he votes variously as his opinion leads him; and his first production was in French, in which language he shines too. I know him a little, never suspected the extent of his talents, for he is perfectly modest, or I want penetration, which I know too, but I intend to know him a great deal more—there! there is food for your residence at York.

Do I know nothing superior to Mr. Gibbon? yes, but not what will entertain you at York; Mr. Gibbon's are good sense and polished art. I talk of great original genius. Lady Di Beauclerk has made seven large drawings in sut-water (her first attempt of the kind) for scenes of my 'Mysterious Mother.' Oh! such drawings, Guido's grace, Albano's children, Poussin's expression, Salvator's boldness in landscape, and Andrea Sacchi's simplicity of composition might perhaps have equalled them had they wrought all together very fine. How an author's vanity can bestow bombast panegyric on his flatterers! Pray, Sir, when did I take myself for an original genius! Did not Shakespeare draw Hamlet from Olaus Ostrogothus, or some such name; did Le Sœur conceive the Chartreuse from any merit in the Legend of St. Bruno. Seeing is believing, miracles are not ceased. I know how prejudiced I am apt to be; some time or other you will see whether I am so in this instance.

Now for specific answers to your queries; many of which answers will not be specific, for I know little more than if I were at York. I know nothing of Garrick's sale of patent, but I know forty stories of his envy and jealousy, that are too long to tell you by mouth of pen; of a Monsr. le Texier, another real prodigy, who acts whole plays, in which every character is perfect—and pray observe he has not read *my* play. In sum, Garrick says when he quits the stage, he will read plays too, but they will be better than Monsr. Texier's (who only reads those of other authors), for he shall write them himself. This I know he has said twice. *Ex pede Herculem.* The Duchess of Kingston only knows whether she will be tried. The Earl's zeal against her was as marvellous to me as to you; I know reasons why he should have done the reverse, and cannot reconcile

[1] Gibbon's father died 10th November, 1770, in his sixty-fourth year. Walpole is in error in describing Gibbon's father as an alderman.—CUNNINGHAM.

contradictions. Why should not Sayer's affair sleep? what, who is awake? For your hundred other queries which you have not put to me, I shall not attempt to guess them, not from idleness, but from the probable incapacity of my being able to answer them. The womb of time is big; we shall see whether she is delivered of mice or mountains.

One word about myself, and I have done. I know you disliked my answer to Dr. Milles, and I know I was angry both at him and Mr. Hume. The latter had acted very treacherously by the story I have hinted at of the Swiss Reviewer. Dr. Milles is a fool, who had been set on by Lord Hardwicke and that set, and at whom I have glanced. I have received many indirect little mischiefs from the Earl, who has of late courted me as much, and I have been civil to him. But my answers shall some time or other appear when I only shall be blamed and my antagonists will be dead, and not hurt by them. For Mr. Masters,[1] he is a dirty simpleton, who began by flattering me, and because I neglected him, joined the pack. The arguments in the answers are very essential to the question, and I shall not give myself the trouble of extracting the ridicule on the answerers, as they deserved it.

My hands you see are well, but I could not have written so long an epistle with my feet, which are still in their flannels. As my spirits always revive in proportion as pain subsides, I shall take the liberty (Sir Residentiary) to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday, to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an Eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with *January*, and which she desired me not to criticise, as some of the rhymes were incorrect, a license I adopted in my second line:

> Though lame and old, I do not burn
> With fretfulness to scare ye;
> And charms and wit like yours would turn
> To May my January.
> The God who can inspire and heal
> Sure breathed your lines, sweet Fairy,
> For as I read, I feel, I feel,
> I'm not quite January.

Probably you would have liked better to have the Eclogue, but I had not leave to send it.

[1] Mr. Masters wrote remarks on Walpole's 'Historic Doubts in the Life and Reign of Richard the Third;' see 'Archæologia,' ii. p. 195, 4to, 1770. He wrote also on other antiquarian subjects. He was born 1718, and died 1798.—Mitford.

1565. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 29, 1776.

My confinement has made me a great devourer of quartos. I am impatient to tell you what I have found in one as large as Mr. Gibbon's, not quite so excellent a work, nor so compressed, but which is not barren of entertainment, though the first sections to be sure are to me absolute Hebrew. This is Dr. Burney's 'History of Music,' a volume that I fear will a little interfere with my friend Sir John Hawkins's on the same subject.

I must begin with telling you that in page 168 the Doctor says, he holds it impossible to be a great poet and a great musician too. Now, not to mention Gray, who (I believe, though I know nothing of music) was a great musician, how could he forget you whom he has not forgotten; for he has celebrated your harmonic knowledge in his notes, though I perceive he did not know that you are an *inventor* in the science, and have begotten a new instrument by the marriage of two others:—but to the point.

Would you believe that the great Abyssinian, Mr. Bruce, whom Dr. B. made me laugh by seriously calling the *intrepid traveller*, has had the intrepidity to write a letter to the Doctor, which the latter has printed in his book; and in which he intrepidly tells lies of almost as large a magnitude as his story of the bramble, into which his Majesty of Abyssinia and his whole army were led by the fault of his General, and which bramble was so tenacious, that his Majesty could not disentangle himself without stripping to the skin and leaving his robes in it, and it being death in that country to procure or compass the Sovereign's nudity, the General lost his head for the error of his march.

In short, Mr. Bruce has not only described six Abyssinian musical instruments, and given their names in the ancient Ethiopic, and in the court language, but contributed a Theban harp, as beautifully and gracefully designed as if Mr. Adam had drawn it for Lady Mansfield's dressing-room, with a sphinx, masks, a patera, and a running foliage of leaves. This harp, Mr. Bruce says, he copied from a painting in fresco on the inside of a cavern near the ancient Thebes, and that it was painted there by the order of Sesostris, and he is not at all astonished at the miracle of its preservation, though he treats poor accurate Dr. Pococke with great contempt for having

been in the cave without seeing this prodigy, which however, graceful as its form is, Mr. Bruce thinks, was not executed by any artist superior to a sign-painter, yet so high was the perfection of the arts in the time of *Sesac*, that a common mechanic could not help rendering faithfully a common instrument. I am sorry our Apelles, Sir Joshua, has not the sign-painter's secret of making his colours last in an open cave for thousands of years.

It is unlucky that Mr. Bruce does not possess another secret reckoned very essential to intrepid travellers—a good memory. Last spring he dined at Mr. Crawfurd's: George Selwyn was one of the company. After relating the story of the bramble, and several other curious particulars, somebody asked Mr. Bruce, if the Abyssinians had any musical instruments? "Musical instruments!" said he, and paused—"yes, I think I remember one—lyre." George Selwyn whispered his neighbour, "I am sure there is one less since he came out of the country." There are now six instruments there.

Remember this letter is only for your own private eye; I do not desire to be engaged in a controversy or a duel.

My gout is waning, and my ambition looks down to getting on a shoe in a few days. Mr. Stonhewer called on me yesterday, and I diverted him with what had just happened. Mr. Cambridge had been with me, and asked me if I knew the famous Beaumarchais, who is in England; I said, "No, Sir, nor ever intend it." "Well, now," said he, "that is exactly my way: I made a resolution early never to be acquainted with authors, they are so vain and so *troublesome*." I am persuaded he has got acquainted with Beaumarchais by this time. Adieu!

P.S. When you read Dr. Burney, pray observe in p. 256, in the notes, a quotation from Huet that exactly describes Bryant's 'Ancient Mythology.'

1566. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, March 1, 1776.

I AM sorry to tell you that the curious old painting at the Tavern in Fleet-street is addled, by the subject turning out a little too old. Alas! it is not the story of Francis I. but of St. Paul. All the coats of arms that should have been French and Austrian, and that I had a mind to convert into Palatine and Lorrain, are the bearings of

Pharisaic nobility. In short, Dr. Percy was here yesterday, and tells me that over Mr. Gough's imaginary Pavia is written *Damascus* in capital letters. Oh! our antiquaries!

Mr. Astle has at last called on me, but I was not well enough to see him. I shall return his visit when I can go out. I hope this will be in a week: I have no pain left, but have a codicil of nervous fevers, for which I am taking the bark. I have nothing new for you in our old way, and therefore will not unnecessarily lengthen my letter, which was only intended to cashier the old painting, though I hear the Antiquaries still go on with having a drawing taken from it —Oh! our Antiquaries!

1567. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, March 11, 1776.

Venisti, vidi, vicisti! Your letter arrived on Saturday, General Conway came yesterday. Sir John Legard will have ample credentials to Brunswick, for Mr. Conway is in friendship and correspondence with Prince Ferdinand, and Sir John will certainly have leave to go *after the review*, if officers are allowed to go abroad *at this time*. Thank you heartily for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Cumberland has published two Odes,[1] in which he has been so bountiful as to secure immortality for Gray, for Dr. James's Powder, and indeed for his own Odes, for Father Time would fall asleep before he could read them through. There is a Dedication to Romney the painter, that hisses with the pertness of a dull man.

Bishop Keene wrote to me t'other day to know if I knew anything of a whole length of my father, that was to be sold by auction, and if I had any objection to his buying it. Was this folly? or is it repentance, and he wants a memento to remind him that he cheated my father's daughter of a living and of marriage?[2]

I mentioned this to my nephew the Bishop of Exeter just now, who told me that when Mr. Grenville was turned out, (who had

[1] 1. 'Ode to the Sun.' 2. 'Ode to Dr. Robert James.'—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] See to Mann, 11th December, 1752 (see vol. ii. p. 318). The picture by Vanloo was sold among Lord Montfort's pictures by Christie. "Mr. Keene [the Bishop's son] bid as far as twenty-six guineas; but as he found Lord Hertford was determined to have it, he stopped there. I told the Bishop that I knew the late Lord Montfort gave sixty guincas to Vanloo for it." *Rev. William Cole*, in *Warburton's Memoirs of Walpole*, ii. 411.—CUNNINGHAM.

offered my Lord of Ely the Primacy of Ireland,) he sent for the person who had brought him the offer, and desired him to tell Mr. Grenville, that he should always acknowledge the obligation; but, that as Mr. Grenville was now out, he thought it right (perhaps he said, honest) to tell him that his Lordship must look up to the King, and to *whomever* his Majesty should make his minister.

The Duke of Wirtemburg is arrived with a mistress, whom he got made Countess of the Empire. The Queen of France would not receive her: she has been received at Court here; the man who keeps the Hotel Garni in Covent Garden[1] would not lodge her for the reputation of his house.

Here is a new epigram from France:

> Quelqu'un, dit on, a peint Voltaire
> Entre la Beaumelle, et Fréron;
> Cela feroit un vrai Calvaire
> S'il n'y manquoit le bon larron.

Voltaire himself has written a little poem called 'Sesostris,' which I do not send you, for it is only the worn-out choice of Hercules.

P.S. I have often thought of a thing, and which, as you are now at York I will mention, and beg you to suggest to Peckitt. You know he and all the modern glass-painters cannot recover the fine ancient reds and greens. How is that possible, when every necklace-shop sells false rubies and emeralds, which jewellers must take out of the setting. To be sure they are not true! and what are those counterfeits but coloured glass? Pray too, could not Peckitt sketch the exact faces of Henry IV. and Richard III. from their statues on the Screen of your cathedral? I would pay him for them.[2]

[1] Low's Hotel (now Evans's) the first family hotel opened in London.—Cunningham.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

March 25, 1776.

What I here send you was written yesterday *currente calamo*, as you will see, and might be much improved if you would please to retouch it. The idea, I think, is a good one, and I could wish it might appear in the Papers for some personal reasons of my own; if any use is made of it, it must be transcribed by some person who does not know my hand, and the original burnt. I fear, after all, the usual fate that attends my squibs will fall on this, and it will be still-born. I question much whether every News-printer be not in her [the Duchess of Kingston's] pay at present; and yet you see all mention of her trial is for that account avoided in the letter. I will say no more, but burn it, or otherwise as you think best. I send it through the Secretary's office [through Fraser] to you for safety.—Mason.

1568. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

March 22, 1776.

I HAVE been so long confined, as I am still, that with a dearth of public events, I have been little disposed to write. My gouts, as they

[*Enclosure.*]

TO HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.

MADAM, *Isle of Ely, March* 22, 1776.

I HAVE just now seen in the public papers that your Grace, with a spirit of Christian benevolence which exceeds that of our two Metropolitans in the proportions of somewhat more than three to two, has contributed the sum of fifty pounds towards alleviating the distresses of the clergy in North America. This emboldens me to ask you a few questions concerning that charity, and to state an objection or two relative to it, not doubting but that your Grace before you thought it prudent to honour the list of subscribers with a name, that would undoubtedly make both the clergy and laity proud of following so illustrious an example, demanded to see those authentic accounts of the distresses in question, which have hitherto been withheld from the world, though the press daily afforded so ready a method of communication.

I beg, therefore, to learn from your Grace whether these misfortunes affect the parochial clergy only, in North America, or extend also to the missionaries sent out for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts by the Society intended for that purpose.

If the parochial clergy be the only sufferers, it must be by deprivation, or loss of their tithes and oblations. Now I should conceive that the best way to relieve them in this point would be to take them home (for the Congress, I presume, would readily part with them), and to place them immediately under the patronage of those diocesans from whom they received their letters of orders; for it cannot be doubted but that many of their Lordships, who have shown so much alacrity to provide for their nephews, daughters' husbands, &c. &c., might in a very short space of time put these their distressed brethren more at their ease than they were even before the American troubles broke out. Of this fact we are very sure, that the annual income of the dignities and pluralities held by two relatives of one opulent prelate more than trebles the sum that the whole Bench have subscribed on this occasion, with your Grace's fifty pounds into the bargain.

If these distresses extend to the Missionaries, the same mode of recalling them is more peculiarly necessary. Indeed it would be now necessary even if they were not distressed: at least they should have orders from Administration to look upon their missions as sinecures. For while the Indians remain in their heathen state, they will surely be better allies to us, and answer our present political purposes with greater energy than if they were previously converted to Christianity: except, indeed, these Missionaries were gifted enough to regenerate them in a moment into such good Christians as your Grace, Lord Sandwich, and Lord George Germaine, a species of conversion, which, as miracles have ceased, is rather to be wished than to be expected.

But perhaps your Grace will say, "Who are you that ask these impertinent questions?" "Madam, I am a country clergyman." "Go then to your diocesan to satisfy your scruples of conscience." "No, Madam, I choose to apply myself to you and for these three cogent reasons:

"First, I believe from my soul that you write letters with more ease than my diocesan, and that your epistolary style is much more spiritual and poignant, especially after dinner.

never attack my head or stomach, are not alarming. One believes they protract one's life, but they certainly undermine its vigour and its comforts. They reckon this winter unfavourable to that disorder, and I certainly have seen several co-patients who complain of the slowness of their recovery. My common sense tells me, that repeated attacks and increasing years must diminish the powers of recovery. If my companions are more sanguine, they flatter themselves, or say they do.

We know nothing new from America, since the general belief that the attempt on Quebec has failed by the death of Montgomery, who was not so fortunate as Wolfe, to die a conqueror, though very near being so. No authentic accounts are come from thence. In truth, the want of communication, but to the Government, bolstered up by an infinitude of lies, renders everything one hears problematic. However, had the Ministers any good news, they would be eager enough to divulge it. The season is far advanced, yet their expeditions are much behindhand, and the troops that do go, will arrive during the dangerous heats. Indeed, I do not think the general language is so prophetic of certain success as it was three months ago, and people seem to grow much more clear of the unpromising aspect of affairs than they were.

What else can I tell you? That dissipation and gaming continue to stride before the war. Yes, verily. A new Club is opened in St. James's-street, that piques itself on surpassing all its predecessors. But this is almost common-place. The Duke of Wirtemberg, who has wasted revenues enough to be worthy to be of it, is here, but *here* is no phenomenon.

A senator of Rome, while Rome survives,

"Secondly, because you have much more Christian humility and obliging condescension than my diocesan. He, I know, would flout my tattered crape, and disdain to give me an answer; but when I tell your Grace that I can bring my college certificate that I had an university education, and my parochial register that I was born of honest parents, I am morally certain that you will not be too haughty to become my correspondent. No, you will never deny that honour to a clergyman of the Church of England, which you so lately bestowed on a reptile, whom you believed to be the son of a Merry-Andrew.

"Thirdly, and lastly, your Grace has by this your late superb donation taken this charity into your immediate and personal protection." You are, by this act and deed of yours, become *the head of the clergy;* and therefore, though I am the lowest member of that body, I have the ambition on this occasion to treat with principals only. Beholding your Grace in this most respectable light, I subscribe myself with the truest devotion, Madam, your Grace's

Most dutiful son and servant,
A Country Clergyman.

can continue to waste as much in one evening as a German prince in an opera for a season. But it is the nation that is really gaming deep—we have set twelve provinces on the cast of a die. The Duke of Chartres,[1] they say, is coming to the University of Newmarket. Different philosophers, in different ages, visit different nations for different kinds of lore. Our crocodiles are not the same with those of Egypt.

The Duke and Duchess [of Gloucester] seem much pleased with Rome. I hope their villa is not within the precincts of the malaria.

I did hear the report of the separation of the Cowpers, but not knowing them, never thought about them. To tell you the truth, the Earl [Cowper], I conclude, is a madman; therefore, I wonder he does *not* come home. Our Countess [Orford], I am told, has bought an estate; is it in Tuscany or Naples?

Everybody is on the quest for tickets for the Duchess of Kingston's trial. I am persuaded her impudence will operate in some singular manner. Probably she will appear in weeds with a train to reach across Westminster-hall, with mourning Maids of Honour to support her when she swoons at her dear Duke's name, and in a black veil to conceal her not blushing. To this farce, novel and curious as it will be, I shall not go. I think cripples have no business in crowds but at the Pool of Bethesda; and to be sure, this is no angel that troubles the waters.

I have nothing to add but an excellent *bon-mot* of Wilkes's yesterday, on Lord George Germaine. The former had moved for a more equal representation, from the natural objection to the small boroughs. Two of them, indeed, he owned, had the merit of sending two great Ministers; Banbury, which chooses Lord North; and East Grinstead, that furnishes an heroic Secretary of State, who might conquer America, though, he believed, it would not be in *Germany*.[2] Adieu!

[1] Afterwards the notorious Duke of Orleans.—WALPOLE.

[2] Alluding to the battle of Minden, where Lord George Germaine was disgraced for not leading up the Blues. Lord Chatham boasted of having conquered America in Germany.—WALPOLE.

1569. TO DR. GEM.[1]

Arlington Street, April 4, 1776.

It is but fair, when one quits one's party, to give notice to those one abandons—at least, modern patriots, who often imbibe their principles of honour at Newmarket, use that civility. You and I, dear Sir, have often agreed in our political notions; and you, I fear, will die without changing your opinion. For my part, I must confess I am totally altered; and, instead of being a warm partisan of liberty, now admire nothing but despotism. You will naturally ask, what place I have gotten, or what bribe I have taken? Those are the criterions of political changes in England—but, as my conversion is of foreign extraction, I shall not be the richer for it. In one word, it is the *relation du lit de justice*[2] that has operated the miracle. When two ministers[3] are found so humane, so virtuous, so excellent, as to study nothing but the welfare and deliverance of the people; when a king listens to such excellent men; and when a parliament, from the basest, most interested motives, interposes to intercept the blessing, must I not change my opinions, and admire arbitrary power? or can I retain my sentiments, without varying the object?

Yes, Sir, I am shocked at the conduct of the Parliament—one would think it was an English one! I am scandalised at the speeches of the *Avocat-général*,[4] who sets up the odious interests of the nobility and clergy against the cries and groans of the poor; and who employs his wicked eloquence to tempt the good young monarch, by personal views, to sacrifice the mass of his subjects to the privileges of the few —But why do I call it eloquence? The fumes of interest had so clouded his rhetoric, that he falls into a downright Iricism.—He tells the King, that the intended tax on the proprietors of land will affect the property not only of the rich, but of the poor. I should be glad to know what is the property of the poor? Have the poor landed estates? Are those who have landed estates the poor? Are the poor that will suffer by the tax, the wretched labourers who are dragged from their famishing families to work on the roads?—But *it is* wicked

[1] An English physician long settled at Paris, no less esteemed for his professional knowledge, than for his kind attention to the poor who applied to him for medical assistance.—Walpole.

[2] The first lit de justice held by Louis XVI.—Walpole.

[3] Messieurs de Malesherbes and Turgot.—Walpole.

[4] Monsieur de Seguier.—Walpole.

eloquence when it finds a reason, or gives a reason for continuing the abuse. The Advocate tells the King, those abuses are *presque consacrés par l'ancienneté;* indeed, he says all that can be said for nobility, it is *consacrée par l'ancienneté;* and thus the length of the pedigree of abuses renders them respectable!

His arguments are as contemptible when he tries to dazzle the King by the great names of Henri Quatre and Sully, of Louis XIV. and Colbert, two couple whom nothing but a mercenary orator would have classed together. Nor, were all four equally venerable, would it prove anything. Even good kings and good ministers, if such have been, may have erred; nay, may have done the best they could. They would not have been good, if they wished their errors should be preserved, the longer they had lasted.

In short, Sir, I think this resistance of the Parliament to the adorable reformation planned by Messrs. de Turgot and Malesherbes is more phlegmatically scandalous than the wildest tyranny of despotism. I forget what the nation was that refused liberty when it was offered. This opposition to so noble a work is worse. A whole people may refuse its own happiness; but these profligate magistrates resist happiness for others, for millions, for posterity!—Nay, do they not half vindicate Maupeou, who crushed them? And you, dear Sir, will you now chide my apostasy? Have I not cleared myself to your eyes? I do not see a shadow of sound logic in all Monsieur Seguier's speeches, but in his proposing that the soldiers should work on the roads, and that passengers should contribute to their fabric; though, as France is not so luxuriously mad as England, I do not believe passengers could support the expense of the roads. That argument, therefore, is like another that the Avocat proposes to the King, and which, he modestly owns, he believes would be impracticable.

I beg your pardon, Sir, for giving you this long trouble; but I could not help venting myself, when shocked to find such renegade conduct in a Parliament that I was rejoiced had been restored. Poor human kind! is it always to breed serpents from its own bowels? In one country, it chooses its representatives, and they sell it and themselves; in others, it exalts despots; in another, it resists the despot when he consults the good of his people! Can we wonder mankind is wretched, when men are such beings? Parliaments run wild with loyalty, when America is to be enslaved or butchered. They rebel, when their country is to be set free! I am not surprised at the idea of the devil being always at our elbows. They who

invented him, no doubt could not conceive how men could be so atrocious to one another, without the intervention of a fiend. Don't you think, if he had never been heard of before, that he would have been invented on the late partition of Poland! Adieu, dear Sir. Yours most sincerely.

1570. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 8, 1776.

You find Circe and Alma Mater are too powerful. Perhaps they are in alliance. *Il faut cultiver son jardin*—you must stick to your garden.

There is Dr. Chandler[1] who was sent by the Dilettanti too, and has just published his 'Travels in Greece.' They are rather travels in Pausanias, for he does little but tell us what Pausanias found worth seeing there. Except that, which is no merit, the book is ill-written and unsatisfactory; and yet he revived my visions towards Athens, and made me wish I was a great king and could purchase to restore it: a great king probably would hold it cheaper to conquer it. This Dr. Chandler, as if to avenge his namesake, flirts at Gray for having clothed "Delphi's barren steep" with woods, and converted Meander's muddy waves into amber, as if amber did not poetically imply the same. I don't wonder, with so little taste, he has written no better.

I bought yesterday a poem in blank verse called 'Amwell,' by a John Scott, Esq.; it is a pious design to immortalise a village in which John Scott, Esq., lives. I only mention it for one grand and beautiful image which struck me extremely

> oft Fancy's ear
> Deep in the gloom of evening woods, has heard
> The last sad sigh of Autumn, when his throne
> To Winter he resign'd.

It puts me in mind of that sublime passage in Dyer's 'Ruins of Rome,'

> hears the voice of Time
> Disparting towers.

I don't know whether you are much acquainted with my Swiss footman, David? Well! he does not think there is so great a prince

[1] Dr. Chandler died December, 1809.—CUNNINGHAM.

in the world as I. Yesterday as I came to breakfast, he told me coolly the Duke of Wirtemburg had called at eight o'clock and wanted a ticket for Strawberry Hill. "Bless me!" said I, "and what did you say?" "I told his Grace you was not awake, and bad him come again at ten." "Good God!" said I, "tell him to call again! don't you know he is a Sovereign Prince?" "No, I did think he was only a common Duke!" I could not help laughing, though I was so shocked. In short, he had called again, and had again been sent away, nor can David yet conceive that I was to be waked. I was forced to write a thousand lies and excuses, and swear I was bedrid with the gout, and could not pay my duty to his Serene Highness, and upon the whole was very glad for being reduced to plead the gout. I sent Philip to show my house, and persist in my crippletude, which in truth is still so fresh, that it would all have revived, if I must have walked or stood two hours to show his Serenity the tombs.

They are translating Shakespeare in France, and 'Othello' is so well done, that it has incredible success. The Abbé Barthélemi, a very good judge and no partialist to England, desired Madame du Deffand to tell me, he finds Shakespeare *superieur à tout et qu'il me prioit de ne regarder que le Dieu et de ne pas faire attention à l'Homme.* This is a strong proof that both the Abbé and the translators understand Shakespeare, but what will they do with Falstaff?—impossible, unless they are as able as Townley, who translated Hudibras so admirably, which before seemed the most impracticable of all achievements.

Is not your residence nearly exhausted, and don't you intend coming southward? Am not I to harbour you? You shall be troubled with no Serene Highnesses, nor have I wasted all my budget in my letters; Lady Di's drawings alone are worth a pilgrimage,—ask Mr. Palgrave who has seen them.

P.S. I have made a blunder, which will have puzzled you. I recollect it was a Dr. Chapman,[1] not Dr. Chandler, who made so good an end by choking himself with mackerel.[2]

[1] Dr. Chapman, Master of Magdalen College, Cambridge. See 'Gray's Works,' by Mitford, iii. 253, 260.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, April 10, 1776.

I HAD formed a scheme by means of an artist here, to get you the exact masks in plaster of the two heads which you wanted out of our [Minster] Screen, which

1571. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill.

I will not trouble you for a cast of King Richard's face, since there is no such thing; nor of King Henry's, since it has lost its mouth. I am grown such an Antiquity myself, and have so little time left to satisfy my fancies, that I willingly contract them within as narrow a compass as I can; yet you commission me to send you Journals of the Duchess's Trial, as if I was to be there! My curiosity would certainly carry me thither sooner almost than to any show upon earth. I have known her from five years old, and seen her in all her stages, but I am not well enough to attend this last act of her drama—possibly may never go to a public place again, having a strong notion of the propriety of seceding, and not trailing one's weaknesses into the world, when age and illness have told one to retire. Thus you must expect no ocular accounts from me, perhaps nothing better than the newspapers would tell you, except with a little more authenticity.

Tuesday, April 16 [1776].

The Duchess-Countess has raised my opinion of her understanding, which was always but at low ebb; for she has behaved so sensibly and with so little affectation, that her auditory are loud in applause of

I thought would be infinitely more satisfactory to you than any drawing; but upon examination I find no King Richard the 3rd amongst them. The sequence ends with Henry 5th, then comes Jammy, who turned out Henry the 6th to make room for his own sweet person, and whom Time in revenge has more mutilated and pitted than any of his more ancient predecessors. But I am sorry for your sake that the said Time has made very free with the mouth and chin of your friend Harry the 4th, insomuch that I hardly think any mask or drawing can be depended upon if taken from it, for there is plainly a circle about the size of a crown piece fallen off round the mouth of the monarch. You may now see indeed where his lips were, but the shape of those lips are quite obliterated. I am sorry that I am obliged to give you so sad an account of his Majesty, but the truth is too glaring to be concealed. If after all you will have either a mask or drawing of it, I will do my best to serve you: it may perhaps serve future antiquaries to demonstrate from it that the King's evil was inherent in English Royalty from temp. Hen. Quart.

The event you talked of in the 'Public Advertiser' has not reached York; in deed, the 'Public Advertiser' never comes to York. "Mercy on me!" cry you, "York is in the Orcades." But I can say no more, only that if I have not an account of the Duchess of Kingston's trial every day from you, I shall die of the pip. The post is just going.

Yours, &c., &c.,

W. Mason.

her. She did not once squall, scream, or faint, was not impudent, nor gorgeous, looked well though pale and trembling; was drest all in black, yet in silk, not crape; with no pennon hoisted but a widow's peak. She spoke of her innocence and of her awe of so venerable an assembly. Yesterday passed in the pleading of her counsel against a second trial, urging the finality of the ecclesiastic sentence. I should think no more would be done to-day than hearing the reply of the prosecutor's counsel.

A previous incident was more entertaining than any part of the piece; the *Grand Seneschal* invited the Duke of Wirtemburg to dinner by a card, and translated it neither into law Latin nor Norman French. By the help of Boyer's Dictionary it began "*Le haut Intendant envoie ses compliments, &c.*" He ordered everybody to be uncovered while the King's commission was being read, and then sat down himself and put on his hat.

Lord Nuneham has just been here, not attending his friend through all her course. She lay at home (or, according to the chaste modern phrase, *slept* there), and the Usher of Black Rod slept in the next room. My Journals are short, but you shall have the sequel. Adieu!

P.S. I this minute receive a letter from poor Mr. Granger's nephew, to tell me his uncle was seized, at the communion table, on Sunday, with an apoplectic fit, and died yesterday morning at five o'clock. He was a good man as ever lived.

2nd P.S. Thurlow, Wedderburn, and Dunning have answered the Duchess's counsel, and then the Lords adjourned till Friday; so at soonest you will hear again by Saturday's post.

1572. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

April 16, 1776.

You will be concerned, my good Sir, for what I have this minute heard from his nephew, that poor Mr. Granger was seized at the communion table on Sunday with an apoplexy, and died yesterday morning at five. I have answered the letter with a word of advice about his manuscripts, that they may not fall into the hands of booksellers. He had been told by idle people so many gossiping stories, that it would hurt him and living persons, if all his collections were

to be printed; for as he was incapable of telling an untruth himself, he suspected nobody else—too great goodness in a biographer.

P.S. The whole world is occupied with the Duchess of Kingston's trial.[1] I don't tell you a word of it; for you will not care about it these two hundred years.

1573. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, April 17, 1776.

I OPENED your letter of the 2nd with trembling, for the Duchess of Gloucester had told me, with great concern, the danger of Lady Lucy.[2] As she was still alive, and your nephew thought her in less danger, I will venture to hope she is safe, because I wish it so much for all your sakes; but I shall be very impatient for another letter, and to hear you yourself are better.

You may think of America, if you please; but we think and talk but of one subject, the solemn comedy that is acting in Westminster-hall. Deep wagers had been laid that the Duchess-Countess would decamp before her trial. This, with a million of other stories, have been so spread, that I am determined to believe no one fact but what I shall read in the printed trial; for at it I have not been, though curious enough about so august a mummery, and so original a culprit; but I am too little recovered to encounter crowds.

The scene opened on Wednesday with all its pomp, and had drawn hither even a Countess Castiglione, from Milan. The doubly-noble prisoner went through her part with universal admiration. Instead of her usual ostentatious folly, and clumsy pretensions to cunning, all her conduct was decent, and even seemed natural. Her dress was entirely black and plain; her attendants not too numerous, her dismay at first perfectly unaffected. A few tears balanced cheerfulness enough; and her presence of mind and attention never deserted her. This rational behaviour, and the pleadings of her four counsel, who contended for the finality of the Ecclesiastical Court's sentence against a second trial, carried her triumphantly through the first day, and turned the stream much in her favour.

[1] In Westminster-hall, before the House of Peers, for intermarrying with the Duke of Kingston during the lifetime of her first husband, Augustus, Earl of Bristol: she was found guilty, but, pleading her privilege, was discharged without any punishment.—WRIGHT.

[2] Lady Lucy Noel, wife of Sir Horace Mann the younger.—WALPOLE.

Yesterday was less propitious. The Attorney and Solicitor-Generals, and Dunning, refuted the Duchess's counsel, made a very contrary impression, and seem to have unhinged some of her firmness. She was blooded as soon as she retired, fell into a great passion of tears, and is, or affects to be, very ill. However, the Lords have given her and themselves a respite of two days. On Friday the opinion of the Judges is to be asked on her plea against a second trial, which, it is not doubted, will be overruled. All the future is uncertainty; whether she will be sent back to the Ecclesiastical Court, or whether the Lords will proceed to trial—either of which would produce deep probing into her history; or whether, to avoid either, she will not plead guilty as soon as the Ecclesiastical Court's decisive jurisdiction is set aside. In fact, this is as much the trial of the Ecclesiastical Court as of the prisoner; and may, at least ought to, produce a reform of that Popish tribunal. The Earl of Bristol[1] does not stand in a fairer predicament; and is not the whole burlesque, when, except the foreigners, there could not be one person in the Hall who was not as much convinced of the bigamy as of their own existence? But the world can make *laws* against crimes, till nobody knows whether there is any crime which may not be committed *legally*.

I now submit to recall my thoughts to America, for the sake of you Italians and little States, who do not know how superior fashion is in a great nation to national interests. You need not be too impatient for events. The army, that was to overrun the Atlantic continent, is not half set out yet; but it will be time enough to go into winter-quarters. What we have heard lately thence is not very promising. The Congress, that was said to be squabbling, seems to act with harmony and spirit; and Quebec is not thought to be so safe as it was a month ago. However, that is the business of the Ministers; nobody else troubles his head about the matter. Few people knew much of America before; and now that all communication is cut off, and the Administration does not think itself bound to chant its own disappointments, or the praises of the enemy, we forget it as much as if Columbus had not routed it out of the ocean.

Who thought of Mrs. [Anne] Pitt rising again at Pisa? I was told she was in Provence, and imagined her on her return. But

[1] Augustus John Hervey, Earl of Bristol. He had never avowed his marriage with Miss Chudleigh, and was supposed to have connived for a sum of money at her marrying the Duke.—WALPOLE.

who can calculate the motions of such eccentric heads as the English? My dear countrymen and women are—very sensible.

I return to poor Lady Lucy and you and your nephew. How I wish you all at ease about her! Pray, too, be assured, I acquiesce in all you say on your own return, though grieved at your resolution, and more so at the necessity you find in adhering to it. It is not my disposition to prefer my own pleasures to the welfare of my friends. Your return might have opened a warm channel of affection, which above thirty years could not freeze; but I am sure you know my steadiness too well to suspect me of cooling to you, because we are both grown too old to meet again. I wished that meeting, as a luxury beyond what old age often tastes; but I am too well prepared for parting with everything, to be ill-humouredly chagrined because one vision fails. Visions are the consolation of life; it is wise to indulge them, unless one builds on them as realities. Our dreams are almost at an end! Mine are mixed with pain; yet I think it does not make me peevish. I accept with thankfulness every hour in which I do not suffer. I am not at all impatient for the moment that will terminate both anguish and cheerfulness, and I endeavour to form my mind to resigning the first with gratitude, and the latter with easy submission. Adieu!

1574. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 20, 1776.

Your obedient Journalist proceeds. He might plead a headache; but as that is generally pleaded when not felt, a real one must not be disgraced by being turned into an excuse, especially by so sacred a minister of truth—as a News-writer.

The plot thickens, or rather opens. Yesterday the Judges were called on for their opinions, and *unâ voce* dismantled the Ecclesiastic Court, which has not been treated with much respect by the Common Law. The Attorney-General [Thurlow] then detailed the life and adventures of Elizabeth Chudleigh, alias Hervey, alias the most high and puissant Princess the Duchess of Kingston. Her Grace bore the narration with a front worthy of her exalted rank. Then was produced the capital witness, the ancient damsel who was present at her first marriage * * * * * * * To this witness the Duchess was benign, but had a transitory swoon at the mention of her dear Duke's name; and at intervals has been blooded

enough to have supplied her execution if necessary. Two babes were likewise proved to have blessed her first nuptials,[1] one of which for aught that appears may exist and become Earl of Bristol. The gallant and faithful Earl of Hillsborough used all his prowess to cross-question and brow-beat the deponent, but her Grace's other champion, Lord Mansfield, did not enter the lists. The Court is now hearing the other witnesses. I have forsworn prophecy, and therefore tell you no particulars of what is to come. If I hear anything in time this evening of the events of the day, you shall know; if not, good night.

P.S. It is near seven, and the Trial is not over. I must go out and learn anecdotes, and cannot come home before the post goes out; so you must have patience till next week.

1575. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Sunday, April 21, 1776.

I HAVE an half hour to spare, and employ it to continue the Trial, which will not be finished before Tuesday evening, when I shall certainly neither have collected the sequel, nor have time to write it, as I am to dine at the Royal Academy.

Friday and Saturday have produced so much against the Duchess-Countess, that she must have been distracted to have sought the Trial, or not poisoned the witnesses. The Judges quashed the Ecclesiastic Court, as summarily as Luther could have done; and Thurlow has given an 'Atalantis' of her Grace's adventures, confirmed by evidence. A maid has appeared who was present at her first marriage and almost at its consummation. Serjeant Hawkins has authenticated the birth of at least one child; and the widow of the parson who married her, and on whom she forced a fictitious register, when she expected the late Lord Bristol's death, and had a mind to be a Countess, has deposed, that though privy to all these circumstances, visiting the new *Duchess*, the latter said to her, "Mrs. Phillips, was not the Duke very good to marry an old maid?" Both these women her avarice had turned against her. Lord

[1] "Augustus Henry, son of the Hon. Augustus Hervey, baptized by the Hon. and Rev. Henry Aston, Nov. 2, 1747."—*Register of Chelsea Old Church.* "The discovery and production of this entry might have spared," says Lysons, "many interrogatories at the Duchess of Kingston's trial."—CUNNINGHAM.

Barrington, subpœnaed against her, after taking the oath, declared he would betray no confidential secrets. The Lords were going to hang him for perjury, but thought better on it, lest a quarrel between the two Houses should prove favourable to America. His Lordship faltered as well as they did; told more than he had declared he would not tell, and yet prevaricated; but for this interlude you must wait for the printed trial, as I cannot relate it accurately.

To-morrow the Duchess makes her defence; and on Tuesday the Lords give sentence. She has not preserved the philosophy of the first day, but abused the first female evidence while giving testimony. Lord Mansfield left the Ecclesiastical Court in the lurch; his cowardice always supplanting his knavery. Adieu! you shall know the sequel by Wednesday or Thursday's post.

P.S. When does your residence conclude? and when do you come to Strawberry Hill?

1576. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 23, 1776.

If you expect a long letter, you will be disappointed; if you are tired of my letters, you will be released. The wisdom of the land has been exerted five days in turning a Duchess into a Countess, and does not think it a punishable crime for a Countess to convert herself into a Duchess. After a paltry defence and an oration of fifty pages, which she herself had written and pronounced well, the sages in spite of the Attorney-General, who brandished a hot iron, dismissed her with the simple injunction of paying her fees; all voting her guilty, the Duke of Newcastle softening his vote with *erroneously, not intentionally.* So ends that solemn farce! which may be indifferently bound up with the 'State Trials' and the History of Moll Flanders.' If you write to her you must direct to the Countess of Bristol. The Earl they say does not intend to leave her that title, nor the House of Meadows a shilling, but there will be quæres to both designs. The Ecclesiastic Court, full as guilty as the culprit, I dare to say, will escape as well. Adieu! allow that I have obeyed you implicitly. I am glad to have done with her.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Dear Sir, *York, May* 1, 1776.

I fear you will think me less susceptible of gratitude than his Grace of Newcastle,

1577. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, April 24, 1776.

I WRITE again so soon, because I owe you the sequel of the trial. If the Pope expects his Duchess back, he must create her one, for her peers have reduced her to a Countess. Her folly and obstinacy now appear in their full vigour; at least her faith in the Ecclesiastical Court, trusting to the infallibility of which she provoked this trial, in the face of every sort of detection. A living witness of the first marriage, a register of it fabricated long afterwards by herself, the widow of the clergyman who married her, many confidants to whom she had trusted the secret, and even Hawkins the surgeon, privy to the birth of her child, appeared against her. The Lords were tender, and would not probe the Earl's collusion; but the Ecclesiastical Court, who so readily accepted their juggle, and sanctified the second match, were brought to shame: they care not, if no reformation follows. The Duchess, who could produce nothing else of consequence in her favour, tried the powers of oratory, and made a long oration, in which she cited the protection of her late mistress.[1] Her

and less punctilious in point of honour than Lord Viscount Barrington, for not having thanked you sooner for your four exquisite 'Journals.' I have, however, prepared something for you which I have the vanity to think will amply recompense you for your trouble; but whether you will receive it in two posts after this, or not receive it at all, I am not able to say. I would not, however, hang you on the tenter of expectation longer than for the space of two posts, and therefore, if you do not receive it in that time, rest in the philosophical reflection that all is for the best, and that your loss will be the public gain, which is a patriotic as well as philosophical sentiment.

In an age whose motto ought to be *squibimus docti indoctique*, it is very hard you should forbid me to squib, and turn me to work in my Garden. But I have obeyed you, and I hope you will soon see my second book in print, if you do not see its author with it; the last sheet is now in the press. I leave York for Aston on Monday the 13th, but hope to hear from you here before I leave it. Our spiritual courtiers here say, that the sentence of their Court binds the parties themselves, though it does not bind other persons. Ergo, B. is not married to C. because they were proved not to be married there, and though C. has been proved to be married to B. in another court, B. is not married to C. notwithstanding: therefore B. cannot sue for a divorce, because he has not been proved in their court to be married to C. I hope you understand me right, *si quid novisti rectius, candidus imperti.*

If I come to town I shall certainly for my own happiness spend as much of my time at Strawberry as possible, but I can say nothing about my journey till I get to Aston.

I am, dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

W. MASON.

[1] Miss Chudleigh had been Maid of Honour to the Princess Dowager of Wales, and

counsel would have curtailed this harangue, but she told them they might be good lawyers, but did not understand speaking to the passions. She concluded her rhetoric with a fit, and the trial with rage, when convicted of the bigamy. The Attorney-General laboured to have her burnt in the hand, but the Judges were hustled into an opinion against it, and it was waived. So all this complication of knavery receives no punishment, but the loss of the Duchy; unless the civil courts below are more severe than the supreme tribunal; and thither her antagonists intend to resort. The Earl's family have talked loudly of a divorce; but if it is true that he has given her a bond of thirty thousand pounds not to molest her, and that this bond is in Lord Barrington's hands, either she will recriminate, and collusion proved prevents a divorce; or his silence will speak the collusion. I am heartily tired of this farce, having heard of nothing else this fortnight. Happily, in this giant town one is not long troubled with stale events. As I have heard no more from you of Lady Lucy, I flatter myself that all danger is over. I shall like to have it confirmed.

There is a report to-day that Spain has made free with Jamaica, and taken it. I do not believe it; but it is certain that America furnishes Administration with no good news. Fifteen thousand of the destined troops are not yet sailed thither.

I have just met with your name in a printed book, in which your politeness is celebrated. It is called 'Letters from Italy by an Englishwoman.' This is a Mrs. Miller, whom perhaps you recollect. Ten years ago I knew her and her husband, the faithful companion of her travels, at Bath, near which they have a small house and garden, in a beautiful spot called Bath-Easton. They were mighty civil simple people, living with her mother, Mrs. Riggs, a rough kind of English humourist. They ran out their fortune, and all went to France to repair it. In France the mother was left with the grandchildren, while the fond pair resorted to Italy. Thence they returned, *her* head turned with France and *bouts-rimés; his*, with *virtù*. They have instituted a poetic academy at Bath-Easton, give out subjects, and distribute prizes; publish the prize verses, and make themselves completely ridiculous; which is a pity, as they are good-natured, well-meaning people. The poor Arcadian patroness

remained so long after she was married to Mr. Hervey, but the marriage was not owned. As she married the Duke of Kingston without being a widow, the enigmatic epitaph of *Ælia Lælia Crispus, nec Virgo, nec Mulier, nec Vidua, sed Omnia*, was applied to her by the author of these Letters.—WALPOLE.

does not spell one word of French or Italian right through her three volumes of Travels. I wonder we have never had our friend Lady Pomfret's, as she had something now and then like sense, they would have been still more absurd. Adieu!

P.S. I must add an anecdote of the Duchess-Countess that I heard last night. On some altercation between her and Sir Francis Molyneux, Black Rod, under whose custody she was in her own house, she carried him into another room, and showed him a hole in the ceiling or wainscot made by a pistol-ball. I have heard formerly that she used to terrify the Duke of Kingston in that manner with threatening to murder him or herself. I think they favoured her age as much as her person on her trial, for they have made her but fifty. She must be fifty-five or six. She and her brother were my playfellows, when we lived at Chelsea, and her father[1] was Deputy-Governor of the College. I am fifty-nine almost, and boys and girls do not play together unless near of an age, much less before one of them is born. I believe you remember them at Chelsea as well as I; and what a heroine her mother was—at least I have not forgotten this story of the latter. She was coming home late at night, with two of the old pensioners as patrol, walking behind the coach. She was asleep, and was awakened by three foot-pads, one of whom held a pistol at her breast. She coolly put her head out of the other window, and said, "Fire!" The patrol fired, and shot the robber. The daughter does not degenerate.

Second P.S. There is not a word of truth in the report about Jamaica; such endless lies are coined every day, that one is afraid of writing a word of news before it is musty with age.

1578. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Ma Chere Amie, *Calais, le 26 April*, 1776.

J'ai l'honneur de vous annoncer que les *Pères* ont decidez que la sentance de la Cour Chrêtienne ne devoit pas justifier le mariage que j'ai contracté avec le Duc de Kingston. Ils ont dishonnerez la Cour Ecclesiastique dont les dogmes ont été suivis inviolablement pendant

[1] Colonel Thomas Chudleigh; died in 1726. See Lysons's 'Environs,' ii. 161.—Cunningham.

1475 années. En detruisant cette cour de justice je suis la malheureuse sacrifice, mais ils ne peuvent enlever mon bien, ils n'ont pas ordonner pour me punir que de leur faire la reverence. Ce fut tout pour le public, mais vis-à-vis de vous, ma chère amie, je vous confesse que je reste dans un étonnement sans egale. L'ame frémit contre l'injustice, qu'on ma faite. J'espère que si vous voulez penser à moi, vous serez persuadée que j'ai resistée pendant 20 années à accepter la main du Duc de Kingston. Scachant que le Comte de Bristol d'à present, autrefois Mr. Hervey, pretendoit avoir des droits sur moi, je ne l'auroit pas dans un age plus avancé risquée, j'ai donc pris le parti de me marier qu'avec la permission de l'archevêque et la sentance de la Cour Ecclesiastique que j'ai en l'honneur de vous montrer.

Mon intention estoit pour le moins aussi bonne que mon sort est malheureux. Je suis donc, ma chère amie, dans la Cour Ecclesiastique reconnue pour Duchesse de Kingston, avec les *Pères* comme Comtesse de Bristol. En ligne directe de ma propre maison il y a 350 ans, et pour les pas je les ayant toujours cedez à ceux qui vouloit les accepter—la grandeur et les richesses ne sont pour moi que des embarras.

Je vous embrasse, et je suis de cœur et d'ame,
ma chère amie, toujours à vous,
ELIZABETH, DUCHESSE DE KINGSTON.[1]

Aussitot que la sentance fut passée je me suis embarqué pour Calais, car ces bons messieurs avoient desin de me retenir en Angleterre par un loi qu'on nomme a *ne exeat regno*, mais m'étant sauvé il n'est plus question de ce malheur la! Je vous prie d'assurer le Prince Connestable de mes respects, et de même au deux Princes Cardinaux.

1579. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 4, 1776.

Do you think I have a Duchess to deplume every day, that you bid me write to you again already? Unconscionable divine, voracious appetite! think of my poor swelled fingers that sigh after repose; think of my quivering ankles, that will carry me to no mart of news.

[1] The spelling of this letter is as in the original, which is in Kirgate's handwriting. There is no address.—R. VERNON SMITH.

I am here these two days, smelling my lilacs, and listening to my nightingales, and leaving the wicked town to the young and healthy. I did not *utinam* that *sedes senectæ* should be my fate, that I should be able to do nothing but *sit* in my garden; but I am content hitherto, though I doubt the rest of my days will be still less comfortable; you might gild them if you would, but your letter hesitates whether you shall come southward or not this summer; remember, I must not calculate without my host the gout. Well, let me see the drawing you talk of, and which yet I must wait two posts before I know whether I am to see or not. You must have a mighty opinion of my patience or indifference, when you put it to so tantalising a trial; be assured I have neither; neither the virtue of commanding my desires, nor the apathy that looks like commanding them. Those same desires of mine, it is true, are exceedingly contracted of late years, but then I *valdè volo* what I do *volo*. My curiosity about anything you draw or write is augmented in proportion as it is decayed in general: my eyes are grown stronger as my other utensils are enfeebled. They twinkle with eagerness when you tell me of your drawing [from Gray], or your "Garden" being finished.

The Countess of Bristol retired to Paris incontinently. A *ne exeat regno* came forth the night she was gone! a strange neglect in her adversaries! Don't let us talk of her any more; yes, I will tell you what the droll caustic Lord Abercorn said. Somebody hoped his Lordship had not suffered by the trial; he replied, "Nobody suffered by it."

They write to me from London that the provincial army, having been reinforced, had prepared to storm Boston, and had begun to canonnade it, and that General Howe, unable to maintain his post, had withdrawn with all his forces to Halifax. I had heard this on Thursday before I came out of town, but did not believe it, for the Americans have done nothing yet that has given me a high opinion of their generalship. And that Halifax was left for Howe to retreat to is hitherto incomprehensible, not to me, for I am ignorance itself; but everybody says so, and you know everybody is always in the right.

Soame Jenyns has published a confirmation of the Christian Religion from internal evidence. Pray was not his Origin of Evil a little heterodox? I have dipped a little into this new piece, and thought I saw something like irony, but to be sure I am wrong, for the *Ecclesiastical Court* are quite satisfied. I must seal my letter, and

leave my Blue Room to be seen by *Prince Yuzupoff*, who sent for a card of admission. We have a torrent of foreigners in England, and unfortunately they are all sent hither, but then they comprehend nothing, and are gone in half an hour. I have read an account of Strawberry in a book called 'Londres;' in which my name is Robert, my house lives at Putney, the book-cases in the library are of inlaid woods, and I have not a window but is entirely of painted glass. This is called seeing and describing. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

1580. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

May 14, 1776.

You are not apt to express yourself unintelligibly, nor I, I hope, to misunderstand you; I did not expect a drawing in colour, but with the pen, in chiaroscuro, which I like better on some subjects than in oil. I am still sorry it is not to be in the Exhibition.

I am but this minute come to town, and know nothing but from the papers, which say everything prospers with the Americans. As they are driving out all the Scotch, I conclude the Duchess of Kingston will contribute another bank-note.

Do you, or do you not, ever come to town again? do not be enigmatic in a reply to this question.

Yours ever,

H. W.

1581. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 17, 1776.

As I knew no more than the newspapers would tell you, I did not announce to you the retreat of the King's army from Boston. Great pains were taken, and no wonder, to soften this disgrace. Such arts may serve a moment, but the truth emerges, unless some advantage compensates—and as yet, that is neither the case, nor seems likely to be. What is or will be the fate of General Howe or his army cannot be known for some time—I doubt his prospect is not fair. Many think Quebec itself is gone, and that the Ministry knew it. The American war begins to lose its popularity.

I saw in the papers to-day that your younger[1] sister is dead. I

[1] The two younger sisters of Sir Horace Mann were married to two gentlemen of the name of Foote, in Kent.—WALPOLE.

tell it you without ceremony: I believe you never was acquainted with her; nor was I. By the long interval, I trust Lady Lucy is quite out of danger, and your nephew at ease about her.

We swarm with new Peers and Peeresses, English, Scotch, and Irish; you will see the two former in the Gazette; the last are known, but not yet declared. We have coveys of foreigners too, particularly French: I have given two dinners here lately to the latter.

Is it not shameful to send such a note as this so far? If I would have recourse to little arts, I might have transcribed the list of peerages, which would have reached to the bottom of the page; but a bead-roll of unknown names would only tire you. It has long been a settled point that we cannot correspond about obscure persons, as many of these are. You are a stranger to common actors: like heroic tragedies, we can deal only in very great personages. Even newspapers have the advantage of me, for they may detail births, deaths, and marriages. The summer will probably not be so barren as that season generally is, though the great campaign will scarcely begin before August; yet Quebec and Halifax must be fruitful of something, and perhaps Virginia and New York: but you are no vulture, and do not desire to banquet on battles. In one word, my letters written for your information, must depend on events; and when they are short, or none, you will excuse it; and now that half my letter has been an apology, it is best to put an end to it.

May 18*th.*

Your letter of the 4th is this moment arrived, with others from France, and would enable me to cancel my last paragraphs. I am heartily sorry for your accounts of Lady Lucy, but cannot believe in the contagion of consumption, especially in a better climate. Were it catching, it would be still more common here than it is. The child may indeed be affected, as partaking of the mother's constitution; but I who have little faith in physicians, have none at all in those of Italy, where physic is as much an old woman as religion.

As soon as I go to town, I will inquire into the etiquette of your proxyhood.[1] The King gives plate to his god-children; you, I dare to say, are to give nothing, and indubitably have no particular dress. Here I think the lord or lady who represents, rides backwards and alone in a royal coach; as your own is a representative of the King's, no doubt it will do; but you shall know in time.

[1] Sir Horace was to stand godfather for the King to a child of Earl Cowper.—WALPOLE.

A great revolution has happened in France. Monsieur de Maurepas and Vergennes, either not to burn their own fingers, or to involve Turgot (of whom the former was grown jealous) and Malesherbes in a scrape, set the latter on representing to the Queen that she ought to abandon M. de Guisnes. Her Majesty, and consequently the public, laughed at him. He, who hated his place, asked to resign, and it was at last granted. But to-day's letters add, that Turgot is also dismissed, and the King has thanked M. de Guisnes for his services and made him a *Duc à brevet.* This implies what I have said these six months, that a woman who is always in the society of a man, however unmanly and unwomanly, would prevail at last, if he passed no moments in the society of any other woman. Malesherbes is the best of men, but void of all ambition. Turgot has the ambition of reforming the nation, and blessing the people; is intrepid, indifferent to fortune, and determined to carry his points, or fall. Such men, friends of human kind, could not think of war, however fair the opportunity we offered to them. Poor France, and poor England! Choiseul, if not Choiseul, some Louvois or other, will rise out of this fall of patriot philosophers; and then we shall be forced to see the wisdom of the Stamp Act, and of persisting in taxing America! Somebody rings at the gate, but I have said enough to furnish you with reflections. Monsieur de Noailles is named ambassador hither, but that does not comfort me.

May 20.

I saw Lady Holdernesse[1] to-night and consulted her, and found that I had been right in all my directions. *You* can give nothing unless you are ordered; and as you cannot possibly go in one of the King's coaches, need not ride backwards in your own. I have neither room, nor more to say if I had.

1582. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, May 20, 1776.

By my being here for some days I did not receive your drawing so soon as I ought to have done, nor even knew it was arrived. I thank you for it and like it excessively. You have done full justice to Gray; I am sorry he cannot see it, for it is as fine as Mr.

[1] One of the Ladies of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte.—Walpole.

Bentley's drawings for the rest of his Odes. I admire particularly the figure of

Mista black terrific maid,

who has a masculine gait that put me in mind of old Leveridge, when he used to act Hecate in 'Macbeth.' I hope you will draw the 'Descent of Odin,' too, which I love as much as any of Gray's Works. I never was fond of the Triumphs of Owen.

To-night I have received (here in town) from Mr. Stonhewer your second 'Garden;' it has my fullest imprimatur. I thought the beginning a little cold, but it soon rises into charming poetry, and from the 210th line is more beautiful than the first book. I like the *sheep devouring the lawn into verdure*, and from thence all is quite to my taste. *The dusty Sabbath* is admirable, but above all I am touched with the scene of cottage children, which is equal to any thing you ever wrote; so are the lines on their sorrow and smiles. The story of Abdolonimus finishes the whole nobly. Write away, write away, and if you will not come to town—write away; yet I do wish now and then to see such a priest of Apollo. Adieu!

P.S. This was not sent so soon as it ought to have been by an accident.[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR: *Aston, May* 28, 1776.

You are wondrous partial both to my Drawing and my didactile Poem, but want to hear what worse (yet, more impartial) judges say to them; at present I know nothing; but don't tell me by letter, for I mean to see you speedily. I have agreed with Mr. Montagu to accompany him to town next week. Be assured after my arrival I shall make you a speedy visit at Strawberry, where I fancy this will find you. I mean to fly about from place to place a good deal, to make amends to my constitution for the last half year of my life, which has been very sedentary and pick-toothish. More of my schemes when we meet; at present excuse this hasty scribble, which is merely to tell you that I am coming, and that I am, Most truly yours,

W. MASON.

I shall be to be heard of after Wednesday or Thursday at mine host's [Stonhewer] of Curzon Street.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Curzon Street, Friday Evening, 1776.

I WAS ready here either to drink coffee with you to-day, or to dine on apple-pie and cheese with you; two things that I think make a better union than many governors and preceptors do, however unfashionable it may be to think so. I am sorry you could not come; but whenever you let me know you are in town, I will take the first moment to wait on you, and to attend you to Strawberry Hill, if I can get all my necessary visits of punctilio paid before; but I find infinitely more good company left in town, than either I expected or wished.

W. MASON.

1583. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, May 27, 1776.

This fatal year puts to the proof the nerves of my friendship! I was disappointed of seeing you when I had set my heart on it; and now I have lost Mr. Chute![1] It is a heavy blow; but such strokes reconcile one's self to parting with this pretty vision, life! What is it, when one has no longer those to whom one speaks as confidentially as to one's own soul? Old friends are the great blessing of one's latter years—half a word conveys one's meaning. They have memory of the same events, and have the same mode of thinking. Mr. Chute and I agreed invariably in our principles; he was my counsel in my affairs, was my oracle in taste, the standard to whom I submitted my trifles, and the genius that presided over poor Strawberry! His sense decided me in everything; his wit and quickness illuminated everything. I saw him oftener than any man; to him in every difficulty I had recourse, and him I loved to have here, as our friendship was so entire, and we knew one another so entirely, that he alone never was the least constraint to me. We passed many hours together without saying a syllable to each other; for we were both above ceremony. I left him without excusing myself, read or wrote before him, as if he were not present. Alas! alas! and how *self* presides even in our grief! I am lamenting myself, not him!—no, I am lamenting my other self. Half is gone; the other remains solitary. Age and sense will make me bear my affliction with submission and composure—but for ever—that little *for ever* that remains, I shall miss him. My first thought will always be, *I will go talk to Mr. Chute on this;* the second, *alas! I cannot;* and therefore judge how my life is poisoned! I shall only seem to be staying behind one who is set out a little before me.

Mr. Chute for these last two or three years was much broken by his long and repeated shocks of gout, yet was amazingly well, considering that he had suffered by it from twenty to seventy-three! Still as he never had had it in his head or stomach; I never was alarmed till last summer, when he had a low lingering fever, and sickness and pain in his breast, with returns of an excessive palpitation at his heart, which formerly much alarmed me, but of which

[1] John Chute, Esq., of the Vine, in Hampshire; the last of the male line.—Walpole.

he had been free for some years. He got better and went to the Bath, which gave him the gout, and here turned quite well; so well, that, alarmed at our situation, he thought of drawing some money out of the Stocks and buying an annuity, saying, that he thought his life as good as any man's for five years. I am sure I thought so too. On Thursday last, being surprised at his not calling on me for three days, which was unusual, I went to him and was told that he was very ill. I found him in bed; he had so violent a pain in his breast that two days before he had sent for Dr. Thomas, whom he had consulted in the summer, though of all men the most averse to physicians. Thomas had given him an hundred drops of laudanum and asafœtida. Mr. Chute said, *it is not the gout; I have had my palpitation, and fear it is something of a polypus.* Thus, perfectly reasonable, though with much more indifference than he who was all spirit and eagerness used to have, I attributed it to the laudanum, and indeed he desired me to leave him, as he was heavy, and wanted to sleep. He dozed all that evening, and had no return of pain. On Friday morning, still without pain. I saw him again. He had taken more asafœtida, but no more laudanum; yet, when I said, I trusted the pain was gone, he said, *I do not know; the effects of the laudanum are not yet gone.* I said, I thought that impossible; that the pain would have surmounted the laudanum by that time, if the pain were not removed. I was coming hither on business, and charged his valet to send for me if the pain returned. On Saturday morning I rejoiced at not receiving even a letter by the post, and concluded all was well.

This dream of satisfaction lasted all that day and Saturday night. I knew he would take no more laudanum, unless the pain returned, and that then I should be advertised. But, oh, unhappy! yesterday, just as I had breakfasted, and was in the garden, I heard the bell at the gate ring, and wondered, as it was but ten o'clock, who could come to me so early. I went to see, and met my valet-de-chambre, with a letter in his hand, who said, *Oh, Sir, Mr. Chute is dead!* In a word, he had continued quite easy till three that morning, when he said, *Who is in the room?* His own valet replied, *I, Sir!* and, going to the bed, found him very ill, ran to call help, and, returning as quickly as possible, saw him dead! It was certainly a polypus; his side immediately grew black as ink. A charming death for him, dearest friend! And why should I lament? His eyes, always short-sighted, were grown dimmer, his hearing was grown imperfect, his hands were all chalk-stones and of little use, his feet very lame—yet how not lament? The vigour of his mind

was strong as ever; his power of reasoning clear as demonstration; his rapid wit astonishing as at forty,[1] about which time you and I knew him first. Even the impetuosity of his temper was not abated, and all his humane virtues had but increased with his age. He was grown sick of the world; saw very, very few persons; submitted with unparalleled patience to all his sufferings; and, in five-and-thirty years, I never once saw or heard him complain of them, nor, passionate as he was, knew him fretful. His impatience seemed to proceed from his vast sense, not from his temper: he saw everything so clearly and immediately, that he could not bear a momentary contradiction from folly or defective reasoning. Sudden contempt broke out, particularly on politics, which, having been fixed in him by a most sensible father, and matured by deep reflection, were rooted in his inmost soul. His truth, integrity, honour, spirit, and abhorrence of all dirt, confirmed his contempt; and even I, who am pretty warm and steady, was often forced to break off politics with him, so impossible was it to be zealous enough to content him when I most agreed with him. Nay, if I disputed with him, I learnt something from him, and always saw truth in a stronger and more summary light.

His possession of the quintessence of argument reduced it at once into axioms, and the clearness of his ideas struck out flashes of the brightest wit. He saw so suddenly and so far, that, as Mr. Bentley said of him long ago, *his wit strikes the more you analyse it, and more than at first hearing; he jumps over two or three intermediate ideas, and couples the first with the third or fourth.* Don't wonder I pour out my heart to you; you knew him, and know how faithfully true all I say of him. My loss is most irreparable. To me he was the most faithful and secure of friends, and a delightful companion. I shall not seek to replace him. Can I love any that are old, more than I have had reason for loving them? and is it possible to love younger, as one loved an habitual old friend of thirty-five years' standing? I have young relations that may grow upon me, for my nature is affectionate, but can they grow *old* friends? My age forbids that. Still less can they grow companions. Is it friendship to explain half one says? One must relate the history of one's memory and ideas; and what is that to the young, but old stories? No, my dear sir, *you* could be that resource, but I must not think of it—I must not

[1] That is, in the year 1743, if his age is correct; but a little further on he calls him a friend of thirty-five years standing—i.e. 1741.—CUNNINGHAM.

be selfish. I must do what I ought to do, while I remain here; pass my time as amusingly as I can; enjoy the friends I have left; drink my grief in silence—it is too sincere for parade; and what cares the world about my private sensations? Or what has an old man to do but to be forgotten; and to remember how soon he will be so? Forgive this expansion of my heart; it was necessary to me. I will not often mention poor Mr. Chute even to you. His loss is engraven on my soul, and real grief does not seek for applause. Could the world's plaudit comfort me, sit with me, hear me, advise me? Did it know Mr. Chute's worth as well as I did? Does it love me as well? When it does, I will beg its compassion. I have done, and will now show you that I am master of myself, and remember *you*, and consider that at this distance of time you cannot feel what I do, and must be anxious about public affairs. If I indulged my own feelings, I should forswear thinking of the public. *He* is gone to whom I ran with every scrap of news I heard; but I promised to forget myself: I will go take a walk, shed a tear, and return to you more composed.

I take up my pen again, and fear my last sentences have made you expect some news. I know none; except that I think the intoxication of this country begins to wear off. The Stocks have taken the alarm, and the Ministers have felt it some time. The change in the French councils has changed the spirits of ours. I believe almost any peace would be welcome to them. I doubt the Americans have experienced too much of our inability to hurt them; and as I have no great faith in virtue tempted by power, I expect that the American leaders having too fair a field before them, will not easily part with dictatorships and consulships to retire to their private ploughs. Oh! Madness, to have squandered away such an empire! Now we tremble at France, which America enabled us to resist. How naturally our ideas hang on our country, even when all future ages are the same to one who is going to leave it! What will it be to me a few years hence, whether England shrinks back to its little insular insignificance under George the Third or George the Tenth? Yet, as our minds seldom roam into the future affairs of the world, we rejoice or grieve over the state of our country according to the condition in which we leave it at our departure. Else why do people nurse visions of pride about their own descendants? How long do the greatest and most ancient families last? What a speck in rolling ages does the longest genealogy occupy!—but I will moralise no more. To-day's misfortune has given a wise cast to my

mind. Spirits and folly will have their turn again, and perhaps are as wise. To act with common sense according to the moment, is the best wisdom I know; and the best philosophy, to do one's duties, take the world as it comes, submit respectfully to one's lot, bless the Goodness that has given so much happiness with it, whatever it is, and despise affectation, which only makes our weakness more contemptible, by showing we know that we are not what we wish to appear. Adieu!

1584. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

[*Endorsed May* 1776.]

I AM very sorry, my dear Lord, to have missed seeing you both yesterday and to-day; and so I always am, as your goodness to me is excessive, and most gratefully felt. I wished particularly to ask a favour, which is that your lordship will do me the honour of dining at Strawberry Hill some day before you go out of town; and I flatter myself Lady Nuneham will do so too, though she ought to be ashamed to come so near my Printing House, when she is so cruel as to refuse to do it the honour it is so ambitious of. Any day after the birthday will be equal to me, and if you both condescend, I will beg Lord and Lady Jersey to be so good as to meet you.

Are you thunder-struck or laughter-struck with the Revolution in the Penetralia? Whither shall we go if Lord Solon and Bishop Plato are not perfect enough to form young Montezuma, the future Emperor of America? I hear even Mlle. *Crumb* is no longer our *Mie*.

Yours most devotedly,
H. W.

1585. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 1, 1776.

MR. GRANGER'S papers have been purchased by Lord Mountstuart,[2] who has the frenzy of portraits as well as I; and, though I

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] John Lord Mountstuart; in March 1796, created Marquis of Bute. He died at Geneva in November, 1814, when the marquisate descended to his grandson.—WRIGHT.

am the head of the sect, I have no longer the rage of propagating it, nor would I on any account take the trouble of revising and publishing the manuscripts. Mr. Granger had drowned his taste for portraits in the ocean of biography; and, though he began with elucidating prints, he at last only sought prints that he might write the lives of those they represented. His work was grown and growing so voluminous, that an abridgment only could have made it useful to collectors. I am not surprised that you will not assist Dr. Kippis:[1] Bishop Laud and William Prynne could never agree. You are very justly more averse to Mr. Masters, who is a pragmatic fellow, and at best troublesome.

If the agate knives you are so good as to recommend to me can be tolerably authenticated, have any royal marks, or, at least, old setting of the time, and will be sold for two guineas, I should not dislike having them: though I have scarce room to stick a knife and fork. But if I trouble you to pay for them, you must let me know all I owe you already, for I know I am in your debt for prints and pamphlets, and this new debt will make the whole considerable enough to be remitted. I have lately purchased three apostle-spoons to add to the one you was so kind as to give me. What is become of Mr. Essex? does he never visit London? I wish I could tempt him thither or hither. I am not only thinking of building my offices in a collegiate style, for which I have a good design and wish to consult him, but I am actually wanting assistance at this very moment, about a smaller gallery that I wish to add this summer; and which, if Mr. Essex was here, he should build directly.

It is scarce worth asking him to take the journey on purpose, though I would pay for his journey hither and back, and would lodge him here for the necessary time. I can only beg you to mention it to him as an idle jaunt, the object is so trifling. I wish more that you could come with him: do you leave your poor parishioners and their souls to themselves? if you do, I hope Dr. Kippis will seduce them. Yours ever.

[1] In his new and enlarged edition of the 'Biographia Britannica,' of which only five volumes folio appeared. Dr. Andrew Kippis was not ill-fitted for his task; what he did, he did well. He was a Dissenter, and Cole a Churchman, *almost* a Roman Catholic. We shall hear more of Kippis and Walpole.—CUNNINGHAM.

1586. TO SIR HORACE MANN

Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1776.

My letters grow scarce or multiply according as the season is fruitful of events or not. These last days have been very prolific. The freshest incidents, and those that will interest you the most, are from America, and have raised the hopes that a fortnight ago were exceedingly desponding. The provincials have again attempted to storm Quebec, and been repulsed with great loss by the conduct and bravery of Carleton,[1] who, Mr. Conway has all along said, would prove himself a very able general. Succours have since arrived in the town. The remarkable General Lee,[2] is taken prisoner by General Clinton, in Carolina; as the Americans say, by his own treachery: however, though the fact is not doubted, as it comes from themselves, the story is very dark. General Howe is arrived safely at Halifax, some say, having been repulsed at New York. The American Admiral Hopkins, with three or four ships, has been worsted and disgraced by a single frigate. Your Bible, the 'Gazette,' will tell you more particulars, I suppose, for I have not yet seen it; and the Alamains of the Court have given Howe a victory, and Hopkins chains, which I do not believe will appear in that Chronicle; however, you may certainly sing some Te Deums in your own chapel.

These triumphs have come on the back of a very singular revolution which has happened in the Penetralia, and made very great noise. Yesterday se'nnight it was declared that the Bishop of Chester [Markham] and Mr. Jackson,[3] preceptor and sub-preceptor to the Prince of Wales, were dismissed, and that Lord Holdernesse and Mr. Smelt,[4] governor and sub-governor, had resigned their posts; Lord Bruce[5] and Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, being named their successors, and the former declared Earl of Ailesbury. No reason, whatever, was assigned for so total a change,

[1] Afterwards Sir Guy Carleton, Knight of the Bath, and Commander at New York till the peace.—Walpole.

[2] This did not prove true at that time, though it did happen afterwards.—Walpole.

[3] Cyril Jackson, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford; now best known from his statue by Chantrey.—Cunningham.

[4] Leonard Smelt, Esq.—Walpole.

[5] Bruce Brudenel Bruce, youngest brother of the Earl of Cardigan.—Walpole.

which did not allay the astonishment. It is now known that on Lord Holdernesse's return from the south of France, he found a great alienation from him in the minds of his royal pupils,[1] which he attributed to Jackson. This grew so bad, that after vainly complaining of Jackson, and as vainly having obtained reproof, the Bishop, who seemed to be the instigator of the manœuvre and subsequent *disobedience*, was turned out with his instrument, and the Earl saw it hopeless to try to recover his authority. Mr. Smelt, promoted by him, would not survive him. I make no comments—your own mind will suggest alarming reflections on the prospect of a scene that has twice happened since the family came over.

What will you say, if out of this change of decoration, another has happened already; yes, already! Lord Bruce, who had taken seisin, retired abruptly into the country, without asking or taking leave. On inquiry where he was and when he would return, his colleague said he had no thoughts of returning. It is said that his mad wife, Mr. Hoare's daughter, had written a piteous letter, promising she should die if deprived of her dear Lord; but must not her dear lord be as frantic, to quit in so indecent a manner? Have not I told you long, that we are all mad? Whence do you think the successor is chosen? From the self-same family. It is the Duke of Montagu.[2]

Here is a short letter, which with any address I might have made a folio; but I content myself with giving you the quintessence of events. My own mind loses every year the roots that hold it to the world. There is little pleasure in thinking, when one has no longer those to whom and with whom one loved to communicate reflections. One's own country becomes another country when the *dramatis personæ* are totally changed. Young princes and their favourites only give one a peep into the history of the future world, as if a printer brought one the wet sheets of a book that is to be published after one's death. If one outlives one's friends, it is being but a Strulbrug. Adieu!

[1] The Prince of Wales, and Prince Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburgh, afterwards Duke of York.—WALPOLE.

[2] George Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan and Duke of Montagu.—WALPOLE.

1587. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 11, 1776.

I AM grieved, and feel for your gout; I know the vexations and disappointments it occasions, and how often it will return when one thinks it going or gone: it represents life and its vicissitudes. At last I know it makes me content when one does not feel actual pain, and what contents may be called a blessing; but it is that sort of blessing that extinguishes hopes and views, and is not so luxurious but one can bear to relinquish it. I seek amusements now to amuse me; I used to rush into them, because I had an impulse and wished for what I sought. My want of Mr. Essex has a little of both kinds, as it is for an addition to this place, for which my fondness is not worn out. I shall be very glad to see him here either on the 20th or 21st of this month, and shall have no engagement till the 23rd, and will gladly pay his journey. I am sorry I must not hope that you will accompany him.

1588. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, June 20, 1776.

IF one could resign one's place, without being supposed going into Opposition, I should certainly ask my sovereign lady's leave to quit the office of gazetteer; and my motion would be as singular as my practice. Incapacity is my plea, and age the cause. It is a young world, and I neither live in it, nor am acquainted with it. I know nothing worth knowing, I do nothing worth doing—of what can I write?—My old friends die off, I cannot make new, for the fewer ties one has to a world one is going to leave, the better. I have been almost alone at Strawberry ever since your ladyship left town. I came yesterday, and return to-morrow. Had there been any news, I should have heard—nay, perhaps I did, for I called at Mr. Beauclerk's in the evening, where I found Lord Pembroke, Lord Palmerston, Garrick, Burke, the Dean of Derry, Lord Robert Spencer, and Mr. Gibbon; but they talked so loud (not the two last), and made such a noise, and Lord Palmerston so much more noise with trying to talk, that it was impossible to know what they said, under the distance of a mile from them. All I did learn was, that Miss Vernon is not married. I should be very angry if she was, and you

had said nothing of it; and that another lady [1] who has been on the brink of marrying as many dukes as the Duchess of Argyll, is not yet Lady Maynard. It is pity; she deserves a peerage as much as most that have got them lately. The Binghams are incog. at Paris; their letters of recommendation announced them as my Lord and Lady Lucan, and the patents are still wind-bound.

I smiled at your Ladyship's orders, but I think the person you gave me charge of, is in no danger of what you apprehend, unless for debt.

To make this a decent letter, I shall transcribe some lines that I found on my table on Sunday night. I had dined at Lady Blandfords, and the Beauclerks with Mr. Gibbon and Monsieur le Texier had been to drink tea with me in the mean time. The last wrote these lines in a moment, and they are certainly good for impromptus,—

Si vous aviez scû qu'aujourdhui
  Dût venir dans votre *castel*
La plus aimable mylady,
  Qui n'a nulle autre en son pareil;
Vous n'auriez bougé du céans,
  Et sans courir la pretontaine,
Vous auriez attendé cent ans
  Plutôt que perdre telle aubaine.
Pourtant dans icelle visite
  Nous serions bien désappointé
Sans la bonne Dame Marguerite,
  Qui nous a fait d'excellent thé.
Elle a suspendu nos regrets,
  Et nous a prouvé comme un livre,
Par ses soins et son sçavoir vivre,
  Qu'à tels maitres sont tels valets.

I am to have Mr. Essex to-morrow from Cambridge, to try if he can hang me on any where another room for Lady Di's drawings. I have turned the little Yellow Bed-Chamber below stairs into a Beauty Room, with the pictures I bought, along with the Cowley,[2] at Mr. Lovibond's sale, but I could not place the drawings there, because I will have a sanctuary for them, not to be shown to all the profane that come to see the house, who in truth almost drive me out of my house. Adieu, Madam, remember this is summer, and that I am Methusalem. He left off writing news when he was past an hundred.

[1] Nancy Parsons, mistress of the Duke of Grafton. See vol. v. pp. 100, 116, and 347.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] By Zincke. Copies (not very like) by Jervas. At the Strawberry Hill sale, they sold (twenty in all, and in separate lots,) for 130*l.* 12*s.*—CUNNINGHAM.

1589. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 25, 1776.

I ASSURE you, my dear Madam, that it is no idleness that dictates my excuses. It would be my greatest satisfaction to be able to entertain every minute you could bestow on me; nor is my nature idle; but my summers are so solitary, or passed in such insipid company, my age weans me so much from the young and active world, and I care so little what it does, that I cannot write letters, without feeling that they want an apology. When I find I grow old, would it not be strange vanity to imagine that others do not perceive it? I never had parts that could afford to be diminished, and it is honest to give one's friends warning when the crack is begun. But I hate to talk of myself, even on the depreciating side, though much more excusable than its contrary. I have given you notice: you shall know everything I hear worth telling you; but I cannot make brick with my Lady Greenwich's gazettes.

I am extremely pleased with the new Countess of Warwick,[1] though I think the Earl might have made a more suitable match without wandering out of the family. I can easily conceive why a notable aunt did not think so. Before your ladyship's letter arrived, I had heard of a mysterious and very private party on the water, which left me no doubt. There was only Lady Notable, Miss Vernon, the Earl, and his brother. On perceiving they were seen, the ladies held down their heads, and Miss Vernon landed with her hood quite down over her face. How certain should we be of governing the peer, if we could have persuaded him to steal his bride! for you know, Madam, one always governs those one has cunningly made marry. Pray continue your goodness to the two other sisters, that they may spitefully be matched to Dukes; or was it to show more consummate address than another protectress? Forgive me if I suspect that it was not mere kindness to the bride that operated the service, though I hope it will prove real happiness to her, who is so intituled to it.

I heard t'other day from very good authority, that all Ireland is *America mad*—that was the expression. It was answered, *so is all the Continent.* Is it not odd that this island should, for the first

[1] The eldest of 'The Three Vernons.' See vol. v., p. 460.—CUNNINGHAM.

time since it was five years old, be the only country in Europe in its senses?

The case is, England was never governed by Scotland before, where a very profound author[1] has pronounced the wisest heads in Christendom grow; and yet the Scots do not love that author with all his impartiality. Yours, Madam, &c.,

DUNCE SCOTUS.

P.S. I have just been told a good story of the Duchess of Queensberry. She dined at the Dean of Lincoln's with much company. After dinner, the ladies retiring, found themselves shut into a drawing-room without any convenience, and with but one door. When they could keep their patience no longer, the duchess, opening the door into the parlour, said, "Mr. Dean, you have given us an admirable dinner, good wine, and an excellent dessert, but you must remember that we are not Residentiaries."

I enclose[2] a letter of another Duchess [Kingston], which is not much inferior to her epistle to Foote. I believe you may trust to its being genuine, for I received it from Italy.

My lock of hay begs its respects to your hay mountains, and hopes they are in a fair way.

2nd P.S. Though your ladyship would persuade me to cast my slough, I assure you I am not without flatterers of another sort, who encourage me in my Tom-Hearneality. I have just received a poem called Wittenham Hill, in which I am hailed as a father of ancient lore,

> What means (O! for a Walpole's antique skill!)
> What means the milk-white cross on yonder hill!

I can but laugh at my own party-coloured life—sometimes at Paris, and an editor of Grammont; sometimes playing all night at pharaoh with Madame de Mirepoix, or at loo with a greater favourite; now writing fables for Lady Anne, and verses for the Graces; then accused as a plotting Republican; while, at best, the truth is, as I told the late Lord Holland when I set up my printing press,

> Some have at first for wits, then poets past,
> Turned printers next, and prov'd plain fools at last.[3]

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[1] Walpole himself.—CUNNINGHAM.
[2] Not with the papers.—R. VERNON SMITH.
[3] Parody on a couplet in Pope's Essay on Criticism.—CUNNINGHAM.

3rd P.S. They are so amazed and charmed at Paris with Lady Bingham's miniatures, that the Duke of Orleans has given her a room at the Palais-Royal to copy which of his pictures she pleases. The Queen, on the Duc d'Aiguillon's losing his only daughter, begged of the King to permit him to go wherever he pleases, except to Court, with positive command never to appear there. This shows her Majesty's power; and Mr. Falkener, who has just returned from Italy through France, told me last night, that it is generally believed M. de Choiseul will be replaced; that they have thirty-six ships ready, and are even pressing carpenters into the service. What a prospect! Who will at last be the America-mad!

4th P.S. Pray do not give a copy of the Duchess's letter; for I have no ill-will to her, and do not want to spread her follies.

1590. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, June 20, 1776.

I was very glad to receive your letter, not only because always most glad to hear of you, but because I wished to write to you, and had absolutely nothing to say till I had something to answer. I have lain but two nights in town since I saw you; have been, else, constantly here, very much employed, though doing, hearing, knowing exactly nothing. I have had a Gothic architect [Mr. Essex] from Cambridge to design me a gallery, which will end in a mouse, that is, in an hexagon closet of seven feet diameter. I have been making a Beauty Room, which was effected by buying two dozen of small copies of Sir Peter Lely, and hanging them up; and I have been making hay, which is not made, because I put it off for three days, as I chose it should adorn the landscape when I was to have company; and so the rain is come, and has drowned it. However, as I can even turn calculator when it is to comfort me for not minding my interest, I have discovered that it is five to one better for me that my hay should be spoiled than not; for, as the cows will eat it if it is damaged, which horses will not, and as I have five cows and but one horse, is not it plain that the worse my hay is the better? Do not you with your refining head go, and, out of excessive friendship, find out something to destroy my system. I had

rather be a philosopher than a rich man; and yet have so little philosophy, that I had much rather be content than be in the right.

Mr. Beauclerk and Lady Di. have been here four or five days—so I had both content and exercise for my philosophy. I wish Lady Ailesbury was as fortunate! The Pembrokes, Churchills, Le Texier, as you will have heard, and the Garricks have been with us. Perhaps, if alone, I might have come to you; but you are all too healthy and harmonious. I can neither walk nor sing; nor, indeed, am fit for anything but to amuse myself in a sedentary trifling way. What I have most certainly not been doing, is writing anything: a truth I say to you, but do not desire you to repeat. I deign to satisfy scarce anybody else. Whoever reported that I was writing anything, must have been so totally unfounded, that they either blundered by guessing without reason, or knew they lied—and that could not be with any kind intention; though saying I am going to do what I am not going to do, is wretched enough. Whatever is said of me without truth, anybody is welcome to believe that pleases.

In fact, though I have scarce a settled purpose about anything, I think I shall never write any more. I have written a great deal too much, unless I had written better, and I know I should now only write still worse. One's talent, whatever it is, does not improve at near sixty—yet, if I liked it, I dare to say a good reason would not stop my inclination;—but I am grown most indolent in that respect, and most absolutely indifferent to every purpose of vanity. Yet without vanity I am become still prouder and more contemptuous. I have a contempt for my countrymen that makes me despise their approbation. The applause of slaves and of the foolish mad is below ambition. Mine is the haughtiness of an ancient Briton, that cannot write what would please this age, and would not, if he could.

Whatever happens in America, this country is undone. I desire to be reckoned of the last age, and to be thought to have lived to be superannuated, preserving my senses only for myself and for the few I value. I cannot aspire to be traduced like Algernon Sydney, and content myself with sacrificing to him amongst my lares. Unalterable in my principles, careless about most things below essentials, indulging myself in trifles by system, annihilating myself by choice, but dreading folly at an unseemly age, I contrive to pass my time agreeably enough, yet see its termination approach without anxiety. This is a true picture of my mind; and it must be true, because drawn for you, whom I would not deceive, and could not, if I would. Your question on my being writing drew it forth, though with more

seriousness than the report deserved—yet talking to one's dearest friend is neither wrong nor out of season. Nay, you are my best apology. I have always contented myself with your being perfect, or, if your modesty demands a mitigated term, I will say, unexceptionable. It is comical, to be sure, to have always been more solicitous about the virtue of one's friend than about one's own; yet, I repeat it, you are my apology—though I never was so unreasonable as to make you answerable for my faults in return; I take them wholly to myself. But enough of this. When I know my own mind, for hitherto I have settled no plan for my summer, I will come to you. Adieu!

1591. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1776.

Wars and rumours of wars! Is your Bedfordshire militia ready, Madam? The Duc de Chartres is at Cales, and even the Stocks, who hitherto have been as dull as the country gentlemen, begin not to like it. The Duke of Richmond, who is returned, thinks Maurepas will keep off the war as long as he can, and yet the Duke owns the preparations are prodigious; and that Spain has insisted on this armament. Do they humour her in an armament, and yet mean nothing by it? Where have we an army, except of Irish peers?

When is Henrietta to take possession of Warwick Castle? Is a Dun cow to be roasted whole, or boiled in Guy's caldron? Lady Powis is gone for such an exploit on her son's coming of age. This is all I know upon earth, but that my hay is a perfect water souchy, and my roses and orange-flowers all drowned; and I am such a heathen, that I am more sorry for my nosegays than my revenue. Have you had but a patriot court? that is, a thin one? You see I am disposed, Madam, to pay my *quitrents*, though I have but a pepper-corn; but we that know nothing, can say nothing. Jemmy Brudenel, no doubt, can write volumes full of matter, happy man, say I.

> He dwells amidst the royal family,
> And can of *all* our Harries, *all* our Edwards talk;[1]

of whom, thank Heaven! there is a tolerable quantity. I shall be much better company when the French land; though, as I have

[1] Pope—Satires of Donne.—Cunningham.

a little money in the Stocks, to be sure it will not be very pleasant. Adieu! Madam; write to me, that I may have something to answer at least.

1592. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, July 13, 1776.

When the wind blows, wait for the Echo. If your ladyship believes all you read in the papers, I humbly pity you. Instead of crediting a quarter, I have the honour to think that there is little but lies in the accounts from America. I see regiments and ships sending every day, as if the Ministers thought they had not half force enough there, though by their own accounts the business will be over before those that are going can pack up a night-cap. Instead of the war being near at an end, I believe we are going to have two more; and as our army is in America, I hope France and Spain will be so punctilious as to go thither after it. If they have not given assurances they will, there does not seem much sense in sending every man out of the kingdom, unless as an excuse for non-resistance. However, as nothing is so fallible as conjectures built on reasoning, I choose to pin my faith on firmer ground. I dreamt that Lord Guilford was sent to the Congress, that the leaders immediately accepted pensions and Irish peerages, and that their wives instantly hoisted pyramids of feathers on their heads to show that their hearts were entirely English. I give you my word this dream is true, and I prefer it to the Gazette itself.

Thus much for my political faith: now to answer your questions, Madam. What am I doing? Strictly speaking, nothing: yet, according to the expressive old adage, I am as busy as a hen and one chick. I am obeying the Gospel, and putting my house in order, am ranging my prints and papers, am *composing* books, in the literal sense, and in the only sense I will compose books any more. I am pasting Henry Bunbury's prints into a volume; and as man is a contradiction, I am setting my house in order against I leave it—and yet am building a new room. I do not go to Bristol, for Lady Laura is recovered, and I shall go for a few days to Brighthelmstone, because I am not recovered, and want the sea air to recover that strength I never had, and is not all returned. Surely there is enough of myself!

Truly I know not whether the young Prince is inoculated or not.

I suppose, as Pope says of Selkirk, *if I live I shall love him,*[1] but as yet he has not taken up an inch in my thoughts, which have vast difficulty in extending their affections to babes and sucklings. Even princes of fourteen do not enter into my Litany. And this leads to another of your ladyship's questions. Windsor is not the great Castle, but its footstool, the small house where Queen Anne used to take a cheerful glass with Lady Masham. It is whispered that change of air has been recommended. Nay, the lookers-out are full of I know not what visions, presented to their wicked imaginations by certain rays that have flashed out of the cloud that lately hung over the A-B-C-dario. *Bon-mots* are quoted worthy of young Ammon in his nonage. Another chimera is, that there is a visible atrophy and wasting. Now for my part, I am determined not to build any views on a fourth reign, like those late seers the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Bolingbroke; because, if I should have the misfortune to survive to that period, I should probably be as much a child as I was when I was presented to George I., and therefore I declare I will never hear a word of politics under George IV.

I came to town last night on a little business, and return to-morrow. The Duchess of Bristol was seen yesterday in this very town. More this deponent saith not.

One word more, on our old quarrel, and I have done. *Such letters* as mine! I will tell you a fact, Madam, in answer to that phrase. On Mr. Chute's death, his executor sent me a bundle of letters he had kept of mine, for above thirty years. I took the trouble to read them over, and I bless my stars they were as silly, insipid things, as ever I don't desire to see again. I thought when I was young and had great spirits, that I had some parts too, but now I have seen it under my own hand that I had not, I will never believe it under any body's hand else; and so I bid you good night.

1593. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 16, 1776.

Every day may produce news from America, but nothing has come since my last. I wish the probability of news may not be opened at a new war-office. The vast preparations in France, exacted as they

[1] Immortal Selkirk:

'As Selkirk, if he lives, will love the Prince.'

Pope, Dialogue ii. See *Walpole's George III.* vol. iv. p. 314.—Cunningham.

pretend by Spain, and not much more comfortable for that, either announce war, may beget it, or at least can easily be blown into a flame. Why we should tempt it, and yet not expect it, is a problem not soluble by my old-fashioned head.

The Duchess of Bristol [Kingston] is returned—to avoid outlawry. The Earl, whom she has made a dowager, talks, and seems to act resolution of being divorced; and the Ecclesiastical Court affects to be ashamed, and thunders against the Duchess. In the meantime the Meadowses[1] prosecute the Earl for the whole receipt of the Kingston estate, as her Grace is his Countess. People cry out, that the House of Lords cannot grant a divorce after such symptoms of collusion. I beg their pardons; I do not know what the House of Lords cannot do.

Will you take this for a letter? It will, at least, do to keep a place for its predecessor, which was more portly, if not more substantial. If I would stoop to artifice, I could insert a list of so many new Irish Lords, that there would be no room to sign my name. But what would you care for a bead-roll of mushrooms, half of whom, like your procession-nobility at Florence,[2] will not be gentlemen under a generation or two? They are like the Lord Bateman, whom George I. made an Irish peer, to avoid making him a Knight of the Bath; for, said he, "I can make him a lord, but I cannot make him a gentleman." Nay, all these earls and barons may be well born for aught I know, but their very number makes them a mob—they are thirty.

What is become of Mrs. Anne Pitt? Lady Lucy Mann, I trust, was in less danger than her husband apprehended. I have a high opinion of the sea, and am going to try its air myself, for I have not recovered my feet quite yet, and always found singular benefit from sea-breezes, which are all I shall try now, and on shore. One ought to try, though one must not imagine that strength is to return, when one is no boy, as it used to do. I have no such impertinent presumption, and always submit with profound deference to whatever penalties years impose, or that tyrant, the gout. Age has still its comforts. They who disdain them, and insist upon pleasures, do not understand their own interest. The most grievous part of old age is the loss of old friends: they have no succedaneum. Adieu!

[1] Nephews of the Duke of Kingston by his only sister, Lady Frances Pierpoint, wife of Mr. Meadows, second son of Sir Philip.—WALPOLE.

[2] Citizens ennobled at Florence are allowed to rank as nobles only at processions, till the third generation.—WALPOLE.

17*th.*

The Duchess of Newcastle [1] died this morning, aged seventy-five. She was perfectly well on Monday night, when she went to bed, was seized between two and three with an apoplexy and total loss of sense, and expired at eleven to-day. I just mention deaths of those you remember. To myself I seem Methuselah, for I can scarcely reckon twenty of those who formed *the world* when I came into it; but, indeed, as my father was Minister, I came into it at five years old. Sometimes I think this my second life, so totally is everything changed.

I did flatter myself with being diverted at your surprise from so general an alteration of persons, objects, manners, as you would have found; but there is an end of all that pleasing vision! I remember when my father went out of place, and was to return visits, which Ministers are excused from doing, he could not guess where he was, finding himself in so many new streets and squares. This was thirty years ago. They have been building ever since, and one would think had imported two or three capitals. London could put Florence into its fob-pocket; but as they build so slightly, if they did not rebuild, it would be just the reverse of Rome, a vast circumference of city surrounding an area of ruins. As its present progress is chiefly north, and Southwark marches south, the metropolis promises to be as broad as long. Rows of houses shoot out every way like a polypus; and, so great is the rage of building everywhere, that, if I stay here a fortnight, without going to town, I look about to see if no new house is built since I went last. America and France must tell us how long this exuberance of opulence is to last! The East Indies, I believe, will not contribute to it much longer. Babylon and Memphis and Rome, probably, stared at their own downfall. Empires did not use to philosophise, nor thought much but of themselves. Such revolutions are better known now, and we ought to expect them—I do not say we do. This little island will be ridiculously proud some ages hence of its former brave days, and swear its capital was once as big again as Paris, or—what is to be the name of the city that will then give laws to Europe—perhaps New York or Philadelphia.

[1] Lady Henrietta Godolphin, eldest daughter of the second Earl of Godolphin, by Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough.—WALPOLE.

1594. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1776.

The inclosed is a charming copy of verses of Voltaire,[1] at least the first part, and *sent bien son ancienne verve.* What a beautiful and pathetic line is

Rit des calamités dont pleurent les *provinces,*

and how applicable in every Paris! and how applicable just now!

This is not my only business, Madam; I beg you will send me a recommendatory letter to Mons. Hubert for Mr. Hardinge, Lord Camden's nephew, who is going a trip to Geneva. You may truly say he is a very clever, amiable young man, a rising chancellor, if the amiable were rising to be chancellors; and if you like to exaggerate, you may add that he will taste and understand Mons. Hubert, neither of which I believe, no more than if he was the present chancellor; and yet he has taken to me, who am as unlike anything he has seen at the Temple, or on the Circuit, as Mons. Hubert, with much less talents. No matter; pray oblige me.

I dined yesterday with Princess Amelie, with the Lords and Ladies Holdernesse, Spencer, Weymouth, the Lords Hertford and Ashburnham, the Ladies Anne Howard, Mary Coke, and Margaret Compton, Mrs. Howe, and Mr. Morrice. We had the finest fruit in the world, I mean in a world where there is fifty times more rain than sun, very little wine, and three long pools at commerce; you may guess if Lord Weymouth was well diverted. Lord and Lady Carmarthen were to have been there, but the Duchess of Newcastle has had a stroke of apoplexy, and lies senseless. As I came home, two footpads, just at the entrance of my own Twickenham, stepped up to my footman on horseback, damned him and bid him stop. Luckily it was not David, but the young fellow, who rode up to the coachman and bid him drive on; and so we shall not make a paragraph in the newspapers. I expected to hear a pistol calling after us, but the lad saw nothing but a large stick, which one of them held up at him. I shall not send him to America after Lord Winchelsea for his spirit.

[1] Not enclosed with the letters.—R. Vernon Smith.

1595. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

You are so good to me, my dear Sir, that I am quite ashamed. I must not send back your charming present, but wish you would give me leave to pay for it, and I shall have the same obligation to you, and still more. It is beautiful in form and colours, and pleases me excessively. In the mean time, I have in a great hurry (for I came home but at noon to meet Mr. Essex) chosen out a few prints for you, such as I think you will like, and beg you to accept them: they enter into no one of my sets. I am heartily grieved at your account of yourself, and no comfort but submission. I was absent to see General Conway, who is far from well. We must take our lot as it falls! joy and sorrow is mixed till the scene closes. I am out of spirits, and shall not mend yours. Mr. Essex is just setting out, and I write in great haste, but am, as I have long been, most truly yours.

1596. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, July 24, 1776.

I WROTE to you yesterday, dear Sir, not only in great haste, but in great confusion, and did not say half I ought to have done for the pretty vase you sent me, and for your constant obliging attention to me. All I can say is, that gratitude attempted even in my haste and concern to put in its word: and I did not mean to pay you (which I hope you will really allow me to do), but to express my sensibility of your kindness. The fact was, that to avoid disappointing Mr. Essex, when I had dragged him hither from Cambridge, I had returned hither precipitately, and yet late, from Park Place, whither I went the day before to see General Conway, who has had a little attack of the paralytic kind. You, who can remember how very long and dearly I have loved so near a relation and particular friend, and who are full of nothing but friendly sensations, can judge how shocked I was to find him more changed than I expected. I suffered so much in constraining and commanding myself, that I was not sorry, as the house was full of relations, to have the plea of Mr Essex, to get away, and came to sigh here by myself. It is, perhaps, to vent my concern that I write now. Mr. Conway is in no manner of danger, is better, his head nor speech are affected, and the physicians, who barely allow the attack to be of the paralytic nature, are

clear it is local, in the muscles of the face. Still has it operated such a revolution in my mind, as no time, *at my age*, can efface. It has at once damped every pursuit which my spirits had even now prevented me from being weaned from, I mean a Virtù.—It is like a mortal distemper in myself; for can amusements amuse, if there is but a glimpse, a vision, of outliving one's friends? I have had dreams in which I thought I wished for fame—it was not certainly posthumous fame at any distance: I feel, I feel it was confined to the memory of those I love. It seems to me impossible for a man who has no friends to do anything for fame; and to me the first position in friendship is, to intend one's friends should survive one; but it is not reasonable to oppress you, who are suffering gout, with my melancholy ideas. Let me know as you mend. What I have said will tell you, what I hope so many years have told you, that I am very constant and sincere to friends of above forty years. I doubt Mr. Essex perceived that my mind was greatly bewildered. He gave me a direction to Mr. Penticross, who, I recollect, Mr. Gray, not you, told me was turned a Methodist teacher. He was a Blue-Coat boy, and came hither then to some of my servants, having at that age a poetic turn. As he has reverted to it, I hope the enthusiasm will take a more agreeable plea. I have not heard of him for many years, and thought he was settled somewhere near Cambridge: I find it is at Wallingford. I wonder those madmen and knaves do not begin to wear out, as their folly is no longer new, and as knavery can turn its hand to any trade according to the humour of the age, which in countries like this is seldom constant. Yours most faithfully.

1597. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sunday night, Aug. 4, 1776.

I SHALL not go to Park Place till the day after to-morrow, having allowed this interval in hopes of finding a greater amendment. I am glad to find everybody thinks I was too much alarmed. The King said he heard it was a very slight attack, but that I was extremely shocked. I am not at all ashamed of being thought too sensible about my friends.

I do not wonder Mr. C. is so gay. I suppose this *fine season* has raised his spirits. They say it has done Lord G. Germaine great good.

I am still less surprised to hear Lord —— said Mr. Conway could not open his eye without help.

"I have seen the man that saw that wondrous sight,"

and should not be surprised if he said he had *seen a comet drop down hail.*

The charade is much better than what I guessed; it is the word *Italien.* Though you do not understand Latin, Madam, you know that *ita* is Latin, and *lien* French,—but perhaps you don't understand French neither.

Pray tell *our* lord that I found last night, in Dr. King's Works that Archbishop Laud *or* Sir John Robinson, who I think was our lord's grandfather, left 100*l.* to whoever would translate Laud's book against Fisher into Latin. I hope the Prelate's self-love was the donor,[1] and not the Martial Gentleman in the Parlour. There is a great deal of the petty history of Queen Anne's reign, in that Dr. King's Works, and yet it requires my perseverance to read three volumes of small print, in which is so much trash. The man had some sense, a great deal more reading, and some humour, but the latter is very vulgar, and pertly vulgar, the worst sort; and oftener fails than succeeds. Then it is the humour of a bigot, who always laughs when he is ill-humoured, and who thinks he must be comical, if the Bible is on his side, for what really makes a bigot laugh, is, that he flatters himself his adversary will be damned. King was besides a jester on the side of Sacheverel and against liberty, in an age when our ancestors had too much sense to be joked into slavery. I am not surprised that this new edition of his works is published now: his humour, though stale, has a better chance of success than even when it was fresh. His biographer[2] says he was sullen, morose, peevish, said many ill-natured things, was drunken, religious and strictly virtuous, a complete character of a high church saint! To prevent your dipping into his verses, I will advertise you that he was an execrable poet, and at the end of his first volume, recommends a republication of fifty thousand verses still more wretched than his own; at the same time advising a translation of our poets into Latin, to give foreigners an idea of our poetry! I beg your ladyship's pardon for saying so much on a trumpery author, but I have no news, and he was new to me.

[1] It was not the "Martial Gentleman in the Parlour." I have a copy of his will, in which no such bequest appears.—R. Vernon Smith.

[2] John Nichols.—Cunningham.

1598. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 11, 1776.

I HAVE so little to tell you, though, perhaps, at the eve of so much, that I shall, I think, only begin this letter to show you the constancy of my attention, but not send it till it is fuller.

You have seen by the public newspapers, that General Carleton has driven the provincials out of all Canada. It is well he fights better than he writes! General Conway has constantly said that he would do great service. The provincials revenge themselves on our ships, took nine Jamaica-men at once, and have just taken two transports with troops; besides half or three quarters starving out West India Islands. General Howe has left Halifax since the beginning of June, on an expedition. Nearly a fortnight ago, he was heard of off New York, and great anxiety was afloat to know farther. Yesterday came letters that he had landed on an island near, without molestation, but learnt that the opposite coast was covered with an hundred cannon, behind which lay a strong army entrenched up to their eyes. This does not diminish the anxiety for the event. His brother, the peer, had not joined him; not that there are appearances promising negotiation. The Congress has declared all the provinces independent, has condemned the Mayor of New York to be hanged for corresponding with their enemies, and have seized Franklin, not the famous doctor, but one of the King's governors. I hope this savage kind of war will not proceed; but they seem to be very determined, and that makes the prospect very melancholy.

I have been much alarmed lately about General Conway, who, by a sudden cold, had something of a paralytic stroke in the face; but as it did not affect his speech or health, and is almost disappeared, I am much easier. He is uneasy himself, with reason, about his daughter.[1] Her husband and his two brothers have contracted a debt—one can scarcely expect to be believed out of England—of seventy thousand pounds! Who but must think himself happy to marry a daughter with only ten thousand pounds to a young man with five thousand pounds a-year rent-charge in present, and twenty-two thousand a-year settled? And yet this daughter at present is

[1] The Hon. Anne Seymour Conway Damer—known by her skill in sculpture and the partial friendship of Horace Walpole. She was a widow in 1776, and died in 1826, surviving her husband fifty years.—CUNNINGHAM.

ruined! Her behaviour is such as her father's would be; she does not only not complain, but desires her very own jewels may be sold. The young men of this age seem to have made a law amongst themselves for declaring their fathers superannuated at fifty, and then dispose of the estates, as if already their own.

How culpable to society was Lord Holland for setting an example of paying such enormous, such gigantic debts! Can you believe that Lord Foley's[1] two sons have borrowed money so extravagantly, that the interest they have contracted to pay, amounts to eighteen thousand pounds a-year? I write the sum at length, lest you should think I have mistaken, and set down two or three figures too much. The Legislature sits quiet, and says it cannot put a stop to such outrageous doings; but thus is it punished for winking at the plunder of the Indies, which cannot suffice. Our Jews and usurers continue to lounge at home, and commit as much rapine as Lord Clive!

Wednesday, 14*th.*

As I doubt whether we shall hear any considerable news soon, I have determined to send away this letter, lest it should be superannuated. The Gazette has already got the start of it, and told you all it pretended to tell. In truth, my letters are little more than companions of the newspapers, or at best evidences for their veracity, which *they* want. Is is incredible how both sides lie about the American war. Even that laconic personage the Gazette has been known to fib, and always takes care not to tell a syllable of bad news. I live here alone, and never hear any but with all the world. Whenever this war shall end, I believe it will be very new; for except two or three great facts, I question whether we, the public, know anything of the matter.

1599. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 16, 1776.

I CANNOT answer your ladyship's questions from any Parisian authority, for my dear old woman [Madame du Deffand], who does not trouble her head about the Court, seldom tells me anything but what relates to her own circle. I have heard here of the favour of my Lady Lucan, and having the same curiosity as your Ladyship, have inquired, but the answer is not come. I know still less of Lord

[1] Thomas and Edward, sons of the first Lord Foley of that line.—WALPOLE.

Clermont's successor: it certainly is not Lord Dillon's son, who is marrying Miss Phipps, for love, at Brussels. He has a cousin at Paris, a beau Dillon, and a fine dancer. If Lady Lucan has made such a conquest by her painting, I think I, who was her master, ought at least to be a minister—But I doubt my fate will resemble me to some Prince, I forget whom, whose tomb they show at Westminster Abbey, who was son, brother, uncle, and father of Kings, but never was King himself.

No, Madam, I shall not go to Brighthelmstone, but another journey that will at least vary the scene a little, for Lady Di. I have asked my nephew's leave to show them Houghton, and to Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury. I do not speak positively, you perceive. I must have permission first.

You may be sure I enter very much, Madam, into your sensations about Miss Vernon's trip to Winterslow Lodge, and approve your consenting to it. One cannot hinder others from doing what one wishes they did not, when they are not in the wrong for doing it; and yet I know one still wishes it did not happen. You can meet with nobody that feels this more than I do; but one must conquer one's-self on those occasions. It is difficult, I own; but as nobody feels exactly what one feels one's-self upon all situations, it is not reasonable to prescribe rules to them from one's own disposition: and yet, though I preach, I admire your fortitude in not having wanted to be preached to; nor is the preacher always so equitable himself. I am sorry you are losing Mr. James. I know what a loss it is to miss a person whose opinions agree with one's own. I will not preach on this chapter too, for I am sure my practice would not be conformable to my doctrine.

Mr. Conway is visibly much mended; and though my impatience is not satisfied yet, in all probability no traces of his disorder will remain. His countenance is quite come to itself; and his disposition was so little disturbed, that in one of the rainy days I passed there, he employed all the morning in cleaning his own boat. He is as indifferent about the accident, and talks of it with as much unconcern as if he had only been out on a skirmishing party.

Friday, 16*th.*

I began this yesterday, and was interrupted. To-day I have heard the shocking news of Mr. Damer's death, who shot himself yesterday, at three o'clock in the morning, at a tavern in Covent Garden. My first alarm was for Mr. Conway; not knowing what

effect such a horrid surprise would have on him, scarce recovered from an attack himself; happily it proves his nerves were not affected, for I have had a very calm letter from him on the occasion. They have sent for me to town, and I shall go to-morrow morning. Mr. Charles Fox, with infinite good nature, met Mrs. Damer coming to town, and stopped her to prepare her for the dismal event. It is almost impossible to refrain from bursting out into common-place reflections on this occasion; but can the walls of Almack's help moralizing, when 5000*l.* a year in present, and 22,000*l.* in reversion are not sufficient for happiness, and cannot check a pistol!

For the first time in my life I think I do not wish Lord Ossory a son, or Lady Anne greatly married! What a distracted nation! I do not wonder Dr. Battie died worth 100,000*l.* Will anybody be worth a shilling but mad doctors? I could write volumes; but recollect that you are not alone as I am, given up to melancholy ideas, with the rain beating on the skylight, and gusts of wind. On other nights, if I heard a noise, I should think it was some desperate gamester breaking open my house; now, every flap of a door is a pistol. I have often said, this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel; but when I thought so first, I was more disposed to smile than to feel; and besides, England was not arrived at its present pitch of frenzy. I begin to doubt whether I have not lived in a system of errors. All my ideas are turned topsy turvy. One must go to some other country and ask whether one has a just notion of anything. To me, everybody round me seems lunatic; yet I think they were sober and wise folks from whom I received all my notions, on money, politics, and what not. Well! I will wait for the echo—I know no better oracle. Good night, Madam. You excuse me in any mood, and therefore I will make no apology for this incoherent rhapsody. My thoughts, with those I love, always flow according to the cast of the hour. A good deal of sensibility and very shattered nerves expose one to strong impressions. Yet when the sages of this world affect a tenderness they do not know, may not a little real feeling be pardoned? It seems, Mentor Duke of Montagu had made a vow of ever wearing weepers for his vixen turtle, and it required a jury of matrons and divines to persuade him he would not go to the Devil and his wife, if he appeared in scarlet and gold on the Prince's birth-day; but he is returned to close mourning like Hamlet, and every Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is edified both ways.

1600. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 19, 1776.

I HAVE time but to write you a line, and it is as usual to beg your help in a sort of literary difficulty. I have received a letter dated "Catherine Hall" from "Ken. Prescot," whom I doubt I have forgotten; for he begins, "Dear Sir," and I protest I cannot recollect him, though I ought. He says he wants to send me a few classical discourses, and he speaks with respect of my father, and, by his trembling hand, seems an old man. All these are reasons for my treating him with great regard; and, being afraid of hurting him, I have written a short and very civil answer, directed to the "Rev. Dr. Prescot." God knows whether he is a clergyman or a doctor, and perhaps I may have betrayed my forgetfulness; but I thought it was best to err on the over civil side. Tell me something about him; I dread his Discourses. Is he the strange man that a few years ago sent me a volume of an uncommon form, and of more uncommon matter? I suspect so.[1]

You shall certainly have two or three of my prints by Mr. Essex when he returns hither and hence, and anything else you will command. I am just now in great concern for the terrible death of General Conway's son-in-law, Mr. Damer, of which, perhaps, you in your solitude have not heard. You are happy who take no part but in the past world, for the *mortui non mordent*, nor do any of the extravagant and distressing things that perhaps they did in their lives. I hope the gout, that persecutes even in a hermitage, has left you.

Yours most sincerely.

1601. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 20, 1776.

YOU will have concluded, on the sight of another letter so soon, that you are to hear of a battle in America. Not so, though you

[1] Dr. Kenrick Prescot, master of Catherine Hall, and author of a quarto volume, published at Cambridge in 1773, entitled, "Letters concerning Homer the Sleeper in Horace; with additional classic amusements."—WRIGHT. See vol. v., p. 440.—CUNNINGHAM.

are going to hear a dismal story, and, which is worse, relative to friends of mine. Indeed the newspapers will have told it to you already, and you have known the principal actor, Mr. Damer, Lord Milton's eldest son, and who married General Conway's only daughter. I think I told you in my last that he and his two brothers most unexpectedly notified to their father that they owed above seventy thousand pounds. The proud lord, for once in the right, refused to pay the debt, or see them. The two eldest were to retire to France, and Mrs. Damer was to accompany them, without a murmur, and with the approbation, though to the great grief, of Mr. Conway and Lady Ailesbury. She was, luckily, gone to take her leave of them, and to return to town last Friday morning. On Thursday, Mr. Damer supped at the Bedford Arms in Covent Garden, with four common women, a blind fiddler, and no other man. At three in the morning he dismissed his seraglio, bidding each receive her guinea at the bar, and ordering Orpheus to come up again in half-an-hour. When he returned, he found a dead silence, and smelt gunpowder. He called, the master of the house came up, and found Mr. Damer sitting in his chair, dead, with a pistol by him and another in his pocket! The ball had not gone through his head, nor made any report. On the table lay a scrap of paper with these words, "The people of the house are not to blame for what has happened, which was my own act." This was the sole tribute he paid to justice and decency!

What a catastrophe for a man at thirty two, heir to two and twenty thousand a year! We are persuaded lunacy, not distress, was the sole cause of his fate. He has often, and even at supper that night, hinted at such an exploit—the very reason why one should not expect it. His brothers have gamed—he never did. He was grave, cool, reasonable, and reserved; but passed his life as he died, with troops of women and the blind fiddler—an odd companion in such scenes! One good springs out of this evil, the leeches, the Jews, and extortioners, will lose very considerably. Lord Milton, whom anything can petrify and nothing soften, will not only not see his remaining sons, but wrecks his fury on Mrs. Damer, though she deserves only pity, and shows no resentment. He insists on selling her jewels, which are magnificent, for discharge of just debts. This is all the hurt he can do her; she must have her jointure of 2500*l.* a-year.

We have no end of these examples of extravagance. There is a Lord Coleraine and his two brothers, who have equalled the Damers,

and almost the Foxes and Foleys. Their father, who died about two years ago, was apprised of their proceedings, and left all he could, 1600*l.* a year to his wife. The unnatural wretches have wheedled her out of all, and Lady Windsor has taken her into her house for subsistence! Very lately they told her she must come to town on business:—it was to show her to the Jews, and convince them hers was a good life—unless she is starved. You must not suppose that such actions are disapproved, for the second brother is going[1] Minister to Brussels, that he may not go to jail, whither he ought to go. I am weary of relating such histories. You shall hear no more of them, for my letters would be the annals of Bedlam. Adieu!

22*nd.*

Since I wrote my letter, an account is come of the total failure of the expedition under General Clinton, Lord Cornwallis, and Sir Peter Parker, against Charleston. The troops landed on Long Island, and then could not act. The fleet attacked a fort, were repulsed, lost a man-of-war, with a captain, lieutenant, and two hundred men, and Sir Peter Parker they say is wounded in six places. They were, besides, forced to burn a store-ship. The provincials are confessed to have behaved remarkably well. This success will not discourage the rest. In what a chaos are we embarked!

1602. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 22, 1776.

I PERCEIVE at last, Madam, that it is very foolish to live out of the world, and a good deal alone; one contracts the strongest prejudices! one fancies one grows old, because one is near threescore; that it is absurd to lay plans for ten or twenty years hence; that one shall not govern the next generation as one did their grandfathers and grandmothers; in short, one imagines one is not immortal. Nay, though there never was an age in which youth thought it so right to anticipate all its prerogatives, and declare its veterans Strulbrugs a little before our time, we silly folks in the country despair of recovering the province of wisdom, that is, keeping young people for ever in leading-strings, while we enjoy the world and dispose of all its blessings over our bottle.

[1] He did not go.—WALPOLE.

The picture of St. George has opened my eyes. I will launch into the world again, and propose to be Prime Minister to King George V., and lay a plan for governing longer than Cardinal Fleury, by surfeiting all the young nobility at Eton and Westminster Schools with sugar-plums. In the meantime if I grow deaf, like the late or present governor, I will have Master George V. taught to talk to me upon his fingers, which will teach both him and me to spell, for it would not be proper to have him bawling secrets of State to me through a speaking-trumpet: and when I come to be Minister, I will secure the attachment of all the young senators by getting drunk with them every night till six in the morning; and if I should never be sober enough to give away places, which is the only real business of a Minister, I will marry a Scotch wife, who shall think of nothing else. I will do still more, and what no Minister yet could ever compass, I will prevent all clamour, by adopting St. George's motto,—"*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," which, if inscribed on the picture now in agitation, will certainly hinder anybody's smiling at it. As one cannot entirely divest one's self of one's character,

But find the ruling passion strong in death,[1]

I propose to conclude my career in a manner worthy of an antiquary, as I was in the last century, and when I am satiated with years and honours, and arrived at a comfortable old age, to break my neck out of a cherry-tree in robbing an orchard, like the Countess of Desmond at an hundred and forty; but don't mention this last idea, Madam, lest that roguish lad, the first Lord of the Admiralty, should steal the thought from me.

Thursday evening.

I scribbled the above this morning on receiving your Ladyship's letter, and have since been at the regatta at Richmond, which was the prettiest and the foolishest sight in the world, as all regattas are. The scene, which lay between the Duke of Montagu's and Lady Cowper's, is so beautiful, that, with its shores covered with multitudes, and the river with boats, in the finest of all evenings, nothing could be more delightful. The King and Queen were on a stage on their own terrace: there were but few barges and streamers, except one of the Duke of Newcastle's, and nobody

[1] Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death.—*Pope.*—CUNNINGHAM.

more in masquerade than they are every day; but enough of a puppet-show.

The Echo is a very discreet personage, and never in a hurry. Ministers are not invulnerable, as you thought. The expedition against Charleston has failed. A man-of-war is lost, with a captain, a lieutenant, and two hundred men, and, as Lord Cranley[1] told me, Sir Peter Parker himself is wounded in six places. They were forced besides to burn a store-ship; and what is ten times worse, *the cowardly rebels* behaved remarkably well. It is called a very ill-advised attempt; though ten days ago what bragging of having got a fifty-gun ship over the bar of Charleston, which had always been thought impossible!

I cannot tell whether I shall go to Houghton, till I know what Mr. Conway determines. The Beauclerks certainly do not go. Mr. Crawfurd sent me a messenger last Friday to tell me the horrid fate of Mr. Damer, and to say he should not see me unless I was in town on Sunday. As I went on the unhappy occasion, I sent to him—and he was out of town. I should not have gone on purpose, as I know him a little too well.

Adieu! Madam; say nothing, and wait for the Echo still—to the end of the year. What she says then will be important.

P.S. You may be perfectly easy about Lord Chewton, for the land forces could not act, though they disembarked on Long Island, —a very ingenious exploit!

1603. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 9, 1776.

May I trouble you, dear Sir, when you see our friend Mr. Essex, to tell him that the tower is covered in, and that whenever he has nothing to do, after this week, I shall be very glad to see him here, if he will only send me a line two or three days beforehand. I have carried this little tower higher than the round one, and it has an exceedingly pretty effect, breaking the long line of the house picturesquely, and looking very ancient.

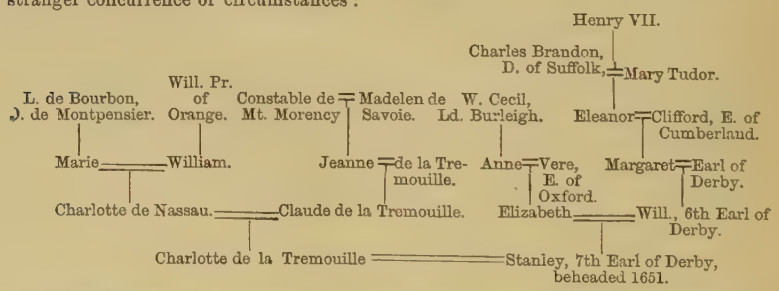
I must correct a little error in the spelling of a name in the pedigree you was so kind as to make out for me last year. The

[1] George Onslow, created Baron and Viscount Cranley and Earl of Onslow; died 1814.—Cunningham.

Derehaughs were not of Colton, but of Coulston-hall. This I discovered oddly this morning. On opening a patch-box that belonged to my mother, and which I have not opened for many years, I found an extremely small silver collaring, about this size—but broad and flat. I remember it was in an old satin bag of coins that my mother found in old Houghton when she first married. I call it a collar from the breadth; for it would not be large enough for a fairy's lap-dog. It was probably made for an infant's little finger, and must have been for a ring, not a collar; for I believe, though she was an heiress, young ladies did not elope so very early in those days. I never knew how it came into the family, but now it is plain, for the inscription on the outside is, "of Coulston-hall, Suff." and it is a confirmation of your pedigree. I have tied it to a piece of paper, with a long inscription, and it is so small, it will not be melted down for the weight; and if not lost from its diminutive person, may remain in the family a long while, and be preserved when some gamester may spend every other bit of silver he has in the world; at least, if one would make heir-looms now, one must take care that they have no value in them.

P.S. I was turning over Edmondson this evening, and observed an odd concurrence[1] of circumstances in the present Lord Carmarthen.[2] By his mother he is the representative of the great Duke of Marlborough, and of old Treasurer Godolphin; by his father, of the Lord-Treasurer Duke of Leeds; and by his grandmother, is

[1] See this odd concurrence set out more fully in Walpole's 'Strange Occurrences,' printed in his Works, vol. iv. p. 363. Mr. Croker has furnished me with a still stranger concurrence of circumstances:



Of these illustrious matches, the only issue is the Atholl family,—descended from the youngest daughter of James, seventh Earl of Derby, and his Lady Charlotte—married to the Earl of Atholl.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Francis Godolphin, Marquis of Carmarthen, only surviving son of Thomas Duke of Leeds; and who, upon the death of his father, in 1789, succeeded to the dukedom. —WRIGHT.

descended from the Lord-Treasurer Oxford. Few men are so well ancestored in so short a compass of time.

1604. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 17, 1776.

I WAS exceedingly rejoiced the other day to hear by a letter from Lord Strafford that you are alive, which I doubted. I had some thoughts of looking into the 'Annual Register' to see if your preferments were given away; but as I find you have only been in a lethargy, and that now I shall not disturb your nap, I venture to put you in mind of a person of whom you have not dreamt these four or five months. This has not been my case, though I have given you no more signs of life. I have been going to write to you fifty times, and only waited for that *small peculiar* of a letter, something to say. I hope you have had no other reason for silence. My want is not yet removed, but though a good excuse for a letter's being short, is not above half a reason for not writing at all. Swinny[1] used to tell a story of two old companions, who sitting together one evening till it was quite dark, without speaking, one called to t'other "Tom, Tom." "Well," said his friend, "what do you say?" "Oh," said t'other, "are you there?" "Ay," said the friend. "Why then don't you say *humph?*" said the first. If I had been in Parliament, and could have franked "humph," I really should have written it before now, though General Howe, who, like his family, never wastes a monosyllable, does not think such little amities necessary. Perhaps he reflects that even that symptom of life would not be communicated to the public, who, it seems, have no business to know any thing that happens out of their own island. Master Froissart says, "By the famous wrytyng of auncient auctours all thynges ben knowen in one place or other," which is a great comfort, and the present age seems to be satisfied with what their posterity will know.

I have lately met with a famous auncient auctour, who did not think that every body ought to know every thing. He is a classic, Sir, with whom you ought to be acquainted; his very name is expressive of his vocation and science; he was called *Sir Hugh Plat*, and has written a tractate on gardening, called the *Garden of*

[1] Owen MacSwinny, manager of the Opera; died 1754.—CUNNINGHAM.

Eden, a very proper title, for though he has planted a tree of knowledge, he forbids it to be tasted, having concealed his principal secret in a figurative description in imitation of Baptista Porta in his natural magic, so that you might as soon understand a book of Alchemy, as Sir Hugh's treatise, at least his secret. This deep volume is not quite to your purpose, not being an essay on landscape-gardens, but rules to improve fruit and flowers, which being still more the fashionable rage at present than laying out ground, I think you would do well, Mr. Mason, to add a book on that subject. One very great secret Sir Hugh has deigned to disclose; it is a receipt for making a Peach-tree bring forth Pomegranates: the process is very simple, and consists in nothing but watering (or strictly speaking milking) the Peach-tree with goat's milk for three days together.

To be sure you want to know a great deal about me myself, though you forgot you did. My whole history consists in having built a new tower, which is a vast deal higher, but very little larger in diameter than an extinguisher; however, it fully answers the founder's intention, which is to hold Lady Di's drawings. Have you done as much in your way, or any way? I could send you a paltry scurrilous letter against Shakespeare, by Voltaire, but it is not worth sending; if it did, you don't deserve it at my hands, so Adieu!

[*Enclosure.*]

LETTRE DE VOLTAIRE À M. D'ARGENTAL.

Mon Cher Ami, *Fernet*, 19 *Juillet*, 1776.

J'apprends que Monsieur de St. Julien arrive dans mon désert avec le Kain. Si la chose est vraie, j'en suis tout étonné et tout joyeux; mais il faut que je vous dise combien je suis faché pour l'honneur du Tripot contre un nommé Tourneur, qu'on dit Secrétaire de la Librarie, et qui ne me paroit pas le Secrétaire du bon goût. Auriez-vous lû deux volumes misérables dans lesquels il veut faire regarder Shakespeare comme le seul modèle de la véritable Tragédie? Il l'appelle le Dieu du Théâtre; il sacrifie tous les François sans exception à son idole, comme on sacrifoit des Cochons à Ceres. Il ne daigne pas nommer Corneille ou Racine: ces deux grands hommes sont seulement enveloppés dans la proscription générale sans que leurs noms soient prononcés. Il y a déjà deux

tomes d'imprimés de ce Shakespeare, qu'on prendrait pour des pièces de la Foire, faites il y a deux cents ans ; ce Maraud a trouvé le secret de faire engager le roi et la reine et toute la famille royale a souscrire à son ouvrage. Avez-vous lû son abominable grimoire dont il y aura encore cinq volumes ? Avez-vous une haine assez vigoureuse contre cet impudent imbécile ? Souffrirez-vous l'affront qu'il fait à la France ? Vous et Monsieur de Thibouville vous êtes trop doux. Il n'y a pas en France assez de camouflets, assez de bonnets d'ânes, assex de pillorie contre un pareil facquin ? Le sang petille dans mes vieilles veines en parlant de lui. S'il ne vous a pas mis en colère, je vous tiens pour un homme impassable. Ce qu'il y a d'affreux c'est que le monstre a un parti en France, et pour comble de calamités, et d'horreur, c'est moi qui autrefois parlai le premier de ce Shakespeare ; c'est moi qui le premier montrai aux François quelques perles que j'avois trouvés dans son enorme fumier. Je ne m'attendais pas que je servirois à fouler aux pieds les couronnes de Racine et de Corneille, pour en orner le front d'un histrion barbare.

Tachez je vous prie d'être aussi en colère que moi, sans quoi je me sens capable de faire un mauvais coup. Quand à mon ami M. le cocher Gilbert, je souhaite qu'il aille au carcan à bride abattue, etc. etc.

I have a mind to provoke you, and so I send you this silly torrent of ribaldry. May the spirit of Pope that dictated your 'Musæus,' animate you to punish this worst of dunces, a genius turned fool with envy. I have a mind to be a dunce too and alter one line of your Epitaph, the last. I think *She heard* should not be repeated twice ; heard is an inharmonious word, and the elision between *she* and *heard* adds to the cacophony, I would read,—

> She heard thy Homer in her Milton's strains,
> *And* Pindar's music from the lyre of Gray.—

Or—

> "thy."

It is very impertinent in me, who have no ear and am no poet, to correct you, who are a musician, and a poet if ever there was one ; but then, I will submit if you do not approve my emendation.

Having nothing new to read, I have been tumbling over my old books, and there I found what I had never read nor heard mentioned, and which I think has a vast deal more of wit than the ancients used in their writings. Mind, I say used, for no doubt all times

and all countries have produced men of wit, and I know Julius Cæsar had a collection of Cicero's *bon-mots*. Diogenes Laertius too has recorded those of the philosophers, very few of which I allow to have any wit in them. The piece I mean is Seneca's *De Morte Claudii Cæsaris*. There is a good deal of Greek in it, and I have forgotten my Greek, and some of my Latin too, and do not understand many passages in this satire; but let me give you an instance of great wit; speaking of his death and the astrologers, who had not foretold it rightly, he says, *horam ejus nemo novit, nemo enim illum unquam natum putavit.*

Last night, I took up Pope's letters to Mr. Digby, and finding Lady Suffolk's name, I regretted having never questioned her about the latter. This is a sort of pleasure I lose every day. I came into the world long enough ago to have informed myself from elder persons of many things I should now like to know; and there is much more satisfaction in inquiring into old stories than in telling them. Formerly I was so foolish, like most young people, as to despise them. I don't mean by this to invite the young to apply to me; I am not over-fond of their company. Recollection is more agreeable than observation at the end of life. Will Dr. Johnson, and I know not most of the rest by name, interest the next age like Addison, Prior, Pope, and Congreve? will General Gage or Sir Peter Parker succeed to the renown of the Duke of Marlborough, even had the last had no more merit than Macpherson will allow him? Oh! there is another of our authors, Macpherson! when one's pen can sink to him, it is time to seal one's letter.

1605. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1776.

You almost confess by your last that you have a little suspected me of having relaxed my veteran punctuality. I doubt your suspicions will have been augmented, for how can you conceive that at so critical a moment, and with so much reason to expect events, six whole weeks will have intervened to-morrow since the letters that brought an account of General Howe being landed on Staten Island in the face of New York? The disgraceful miscarriage of Charleston has come since—but not a syllable from General Howe —not even that his brother has joined him; nor is it known what is become of Lord Howe. The public are impatient, you may be sure:

in the Ministers it is more than impatience. Yet these no-events are all I could have sent you. The despair from hearing nothing does amount to the importance of an article; and when I have told you that, I have said all I know.

Sir William Hamilton is arrived, and I expect he will call on me here in a day or two. I don't know whether he passed through Florence.

You ask, what is become of the Duchess of Kingston? I have just heard of her, having met Lady Harriet Vernon,[1] who is returned from Paris, and saw her there at the Colisée,[2] with a hat and feathers like Henri Quatre. She has given orders for a palace to be taken for her in Paris. At Calais she has a guard at her door, having demanded it, on pretence that her enemies aimed at her life. She obtained it, and has detained it to this moment. Her foolish vanity, you see, will never leave her. I think *your* Lord Cowper is not much wiser. I should not wonder at his retaining the mob, if Florence were a borough town. It would be a sort of poetic justice,[3] if he should send his son to England, and the boy should refuse to return to him. I am sorry other climates cannot repair the eccentricities our own climate occasions.

I am inclined to think you will hear good news of Lady Lucy, as she holds out so long. I heartily wish you may.

I shall reserve the rest of my paper, as my letter cannot begin its journey till the 24th, for any news that may happen to arrive in the interim. When I appear remiss, you may be certain I have nothing to tell you. Being so totally idle, it would be unpardonable to be lazy too, when you depend on my correspondence. When it has been so constant above thirty years, it shall not disgrace itself in its old age.

22*nd*.

The Ministers have heard by a ship which met another ship at sea, that Lord Howe has joined his brother, and that they were preparing to make the attempt on New York. This may be so, and is not improbable; but such round-about intelligence may not be true neither.

Adieu! till there is something to tell you.

[1] Youngest sister of William Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and Lady of the Bedchamber to Princess Amelia.—WALPOLE.

[2] The French Ranelagh.—WALPOLE.

[3] Lord Cowper, from the moment he went to travel, would not return to England, but settled at Florence, and though intreated in the most earnest manner, would not visit his father before the latter's death.—WALPOLE.

1606. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1776.

I AM much obliged to Lord Ossory, Madam, and certainly do not mean to steal a visit to Ampthill in his absence. I shall not be able to see it this month, for I am waiting for Mr. Essex to finish my new tower, which, as my farmer said, is still older than any of the rest.

Pray don't think I am tired of your stories. Nothing is so pleasant as the occurrences of society in a letter. I am always regretting in my correspondence with Madame du Deffand and Sir Horace Mann, that I must not make use of them, as the one has never lived in England, and the other not these fifty years, and so any private stories would want notes as much as Petronius. Sir Horace and I have no acquaintance in common but the Kings and Queens of Europe.

I don't know that the Governor was literally writing to Lord Rockingham; but not having succeeded in his last tergiversation, and being a little disappointed too by the fall of my Lord of Chester, he has been all this summer a violent anti-courtier, till finding that Lord George was discontent with the other Ministers, and that Lady George wanted a loo party, he and his cameleon have attached themselves there, and swear *by George*, like my Lord Hertford.

It is charming, I own, to have dancing spirits, like the Duchess of Queensberry, in the 16th lustrum; but I don't think if I had, that I should have courage to make use of them. I am strangely afraid of being too young of my age. If everybody was an hundred, and I was only ninety, I would play at marbles, if I liked it, because my seniors would say, *That poor young creature!* but the sound of *That old fool!* is too dreadful: and to live upon the memory of what one has been, when nobody remembers it but one's self, is still worse. It is odd, that grey hairs, and dim eyes, and aches, should not be sufficient, but that many want a monitor like Saladin's to cry *Remember you grow old.*

Do you know, Madam, that the Ministers firmly believe, from the captain of a ship that met another ship at sea, that Lord Howe has joined his brother, and they were preparing to storm New York. The circumstances are no doubt very probable; but should you believe that the silent Howes communicated their intentions to a passenger that was walking by at sea? The General has been

profoundly taciturn for six weeks, and I don't think that, in that family, two negative reserves make an affirmative chattering.

Guessing I don't love, because I seldom guess right, but I have something that is called a *presentiment*, that tells me we shall hear of something called a *negotiation*. I could give something like reasons for my opinion, but as I always give up anything rather than dispute, it would be inconvenient to my acquiescent system to furnish myself with arguments, which serve no purpose but to make one obstinate to one's opinion. When one believes without consideration, there is no difficulty in changing sentiments.

Sir William Hamilton called on me yesterday for a moment; he is going to Warwick Castle for a fortnight, and I hope will return charmed with his new niece.

1607. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Oct. 8, 1776.

I ANSWER your letter incontinently, because I am charmed with your idea of the cenotaph for Gray, and would not have it wait a moment for my approbation. I do not know what my lines were, for I gave them to you, or have burnt or lost them, but I am sure yours are ten times better, as any thing must naturally be when you and I write on the same subject. I prefer Westminster Abbey to Stoke, or Pembroke chapel; not because due to Gray, whose genius does not want any such distinction, but as due to Westminster Abbey, which would miss him, and to humble the French, who have never had a Homer or a Pindar, nor probably will have, since Voltaire could make nothing more like an epic Poem than the 'Henriade,' and Boileau and Rousseau have succeeded so little in odes, that the French still think that ballad-wright Quinault their best lyric poet; which shows how much they understand lyric poetry! Voltaire has lately written a letter against Shakespeare (occasioned by the new paltry translation, which still has discovered his miraculous powers), and it is as downright Billingsgate as an apple-woman would utter if you overturned her wheelbarrow. Poor old wretch! how envy disgraces the brightest talents! How Gray adored Shakespeare! Partridge, the Almanac-maker, perhaps, was jealous of Sir Isaac Newton. Dr. Goldsmith told me, he himself envied Shakspeare, but Goldsmith was an idiot, with once or twice a fit of parts. It hurts one when a real genius like Voltaire can feel more

spite than admiration, though I am persuaded that his rancour is grounded on his conscious inferiority. I wish you would lash this old scorpion a little, and teach him awe of English poets.

I can tell you nothing more than you see in the common newspapers. Impatience is open-mouthed and open-eared for accounts from New York, on which the attack was to be made on the 26th of August. Success there is more necessary to keep up credit than likely to do more. Should it fail, there is an end of America for England; and if it succeeds, it is at most ground for another campaign. But we choose not to see till we feel, though they who have done the mischief, do not disguise their apprehensions. The colonies have an agent openly at Versailles, and their ships are as openly received into their ports. But I had rather talk of 'Caractacus;' I agree that he will not suffer by not being sputtered by Barry, who has lost all his teeth. Covent Garden is rather above Drury Lane in actors, though both sets are exceedingly bad, so bad—that I almost wish 'Caractacus' was not to appear. Very seldom do I go to the play, for there is no bearing such strollers. I saw 'Lear' the last time Garrick played it, and as I told him I was more shocked at the rest of the company than pleased with him—which I believe was not just what he desired; but to give a greater brilliancy to his own setting, he had selected the very worst performers of his troop; just as Voltaire would wish there were no better poets than Thomson and Akenside. However, as 'Caractacus' has already been read, I do not doubt but it will succeed. It would be a horrible injury to let him be first announced by such unhallowed mouths. In truth, the present taste is in general so vile, that I don't know whether it is not necessary to blunt real merit before it can be applauded.

I have not time to say more: I can say nothing about law, but that I always avoid it if I can; that and everything else wants reformation, and I believe we shall have it from that only reformer, Adversity. I wish I were with you and the good *Palsgrave*, and I always wish you was with me. Adieu!

Yours ever,
H. W.

1608. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 9, 1776.

Somebody, I know not whom, taking me for your Ladyship's postman instead of your gazetteer, I confess, without degrading me,

has sent me the enclosed letter for you. As the postmark is Geneve, I should have supposed it came from Monsieur Hubert; but as he can never have heard of me but from your Ladyship, he cannot be such an oaf as to think a letter would find me sooner than you, and, besides, he must know your direction. In short, it is like Anthony Henley's direction to the Duke of Somerset[1] over against the trunk-shop at Charing-cross, except that in the present case the trunk-shop is very angry at the impertinence to the Duke of Somerset.

I am quite alone and wishing myself at Ampthill. I did not think Mr. Essex could have come *mal-à-propos*, but it is so difficult to get him, and he has built me a tower, so exactly of the fourteenth century, that I did not dare to put him off, lest it should not be ready for furnishing next spring. It is one of those tall thin Flemish towers, that are crowned with a roof like an extinguisher, and puts one in mind of that at Thornbury, called *Buckingham's Plotting Closet*. I hope no Cardinal Wolsey will sit on my skirts for the likeness.

I have lately been lent two delicious large volumes of Queen Elizabeth's jewels, plate, and the new year's gifts to her: every page of one of them is signed by Lord Burleigh. She had more gold and silver plate than Montezuma, and even of her father's plunder of cathedrals and convents, particularly rich mitres set with jewels, and I don't doubt but she sometimes wore them as head of the Church, and fancied herself like Pope Joan. I have extracted some of the articles that are most curious, and here they are.

A looking-glass with the *steel* of agate. [This shows they had no quicksilvered glass, and she must have looked delightfully fierce in a piece of polished steel.] But this was of agate; and the glass was of berril, and had her mother, Anne Boleyn's arms. What a treasure this would be at Strawberry!

A porringer of white purselyn [porcelain] garnished with gold, and a lion at top. [The first porcelain I have read of was in Queen Mary's reign.]

One case of leather painted and gilt with the Duke of Northumberland's [Dudley's] arms, having therein one broad knife, one lesser, two forks, and seven small knives, the hafts of all being silver, enamelled with his arms and word [motto].

One standish of mother-of-pearl, garnished with silver gilt, with

[1] That is, to the proud Duke who lived in Northumberland House.—CUNNINGHAM.

three boxes for ink, dust [sand], and counters of silver gilt. These were, I suppose, to calculate with, as I think they still do in the Exchequer.

A gilt font with a cover, having at top a gilt cross chased with antique faces; also the hand [handle] and foot, and with roses and pomegranates [for Henry the Eighth and Catherine of Arragon]. (This should be at Ampthill, against Lord Gowran's christening) upon the brim, and thereon written, *Maria Regina, Veritas Temporis filia.*

A ship for frankincense of mother-of-pearl, the foot, garnishment, and cover of silver gilt, having the griffon holding the pillar, and Cardinal Wolsey's arms, and a little spoon of silver gilt in it. You see, Madam, by this, and the Duke of Northumberland's knives, that it was charming to be a king or queen in those days, and that all was fish that came to the Crown's net. In short, I am exceedingly angry at Messrs. Hampden and Pym, that were the cause of all these pretty baubles being melted down.

One standing cup of Flanders making, garnished with pearls, enamelled in divers places, containing in the foot thereof seven trenchers of silver parcel gilt standing upon the sides [I cannot make out the ichnography of this brave cup], seven forks set with three pearls a piece; at the end seven knives in a case of the like work, and one pair of snippers [snuffers], the hafts of the knives of wood, and the ends silver gilt, with a pearl at the end of each; and in the top four goblets gilt, and three cups of assay [for the taster] gilt, twelve spoons gilt, and the salts garnished with false pearls, and prettily enamelled; and a candlestick having two sockets joined together; and in the top a clock.

One bed-pan, having the Queen's arms enamelled at the end. Here was luxury, and magnificence and taste! I have a great mind to print these dear MSS., and another of Anne of Denmark's furniture at Somerset-house, which was lent to me lately too. This majesty's joy was in canopies: she had more than there are chairs now in St. James's; and now and then she gave a bed to her lady of the sweet coffers. She had sweet bags enough to hold all the perfumes of Arabia, and a suit of arras with the history of Charles Brandon, and embroidered carpets to lay over cupboards, and fine caparisons of purple velvet, richly embroidered all over with silver, made for his Highness's horse to tilt with in Spain at the time of his being there, which his Queen Henrietta Maria, being a good housewife, ordered to be converted into a bed, as she ordered another

bed to be *translated*, says the inventory, into the French fashion. Queen Anne had, besides, a cradle-mantle of crimson velvet with a broad gold lace bordered with ermines, and lined with carnation taffety; and pillows laced with gold and silver; but, alas! she had only six pair of fine Holland sheets, and thirty pair of ordinary Holland. There remained also three folio pages full of the robes of Henry VIII., and a diaper table-cloth, whose borders were of gold needle-work, and one dozen of napkins suitable; and a smock, very richly wrought with gold, silver, and silk. Pray, Madam, do you think this was her Majesty's wedding shift? I will mention nothing more, but a cabinet of ebony, inlaid with silver, *white* ebony [probably ivory] and gilt with flowers and beasts; and in the drawers a comb-case furnished, two gilt cups in the shape of turkeys [as I have three castors like owls], a dresser for the tongue [I suppose a scraper], and sundry pencils and knitting needles: and another cabinet of cloth of silver, lined with orange-tawny velvet [probably a casket].

Well! considering this solid magnificence, must not all good Christians pray, that when his Majesty has sometime or other conquered America, he will extend his arms to Peru and Mexico, that the Crown may eat off gold trenchers set with pearls, and that the Queen may have smocks as rough with embroidery as hands can make them, and everything for the bed suitable? So prays her and your Ladyship's poor beadsman.

1609. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 13, 1776.

I NEED not tell you what a splendid Gazette has already told. As I was here before the account arrived, and heard it but imperfectly, I could not write so soon as the first post would set out with the news. The provincials have certainly not behaved up to the haughtiness with which they rejected all overtures of peace. It is said they were outwitted, deceived by feints, and drawn into ambuscade. *That* does no honour to their Generals. Great consequences are expected from this victory. I am too ignorant of war, sieges, and America, to pretend to judge; and really have heard so much from both sides that has not proved true, and at the same time such pains are taken to keep people in the dark, that I have laid it down to myself to believe nothing but what is universally allowed. It is

your duty to credit gazettes, and you cannot err while you stick to your Bible. The red Ribbon is to be sent to General Howe, who seems to have acted very sensibly.

I never saw your Duke with the barbarous name—Ostrogothia;[1] nor am longer curious of sights. For the first summer of my life, I have stayed quietly at home; at least not been thirty miles. It has struck fifty-nine with me: which is an hour for thinking of "the great journey," though not for talking of it; in which there always seems a great deal of affectation or unwillingness. Nay, it is silly, too; for how few can one talk to about one's death, that care about it? if they do, it is unkind. My being is so *isolé* and insignificant, that I shall go out, like a lamp in an illumination, that cannot be missed.

1610. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 13, 1776.

Just after I had sent away my last packet with Monsieur Hubert's letter, I heard of General Howe's success, but concluding your Ladyship would hear it from London, I did not write another letter, besides that I knew no particulars. I am not quite of Mr. Fitzpatrick's opinion that the event is of no consequence to the Ministers. I believe a small check would have made them doubt a little whether they should meet the Parliament,—at least for this last month I never saw people more desponding; and this victory has certainly raised their spirits in proportion; at least it has in all I have seen, and I have not seen a soul but courtiers since the news came. Indeed I have not been out of my own house, for on Tuesday last as I came out of town my foot slipped as I got into my chaise, and I hit my knee, which brought the gout thither, and though it is almost gone, it kept me from dining at Lady Blandford's to-day, and has hindered me from scrambling into my new tower with Mr. Essex, which was a vexation; but as I am got into that very grave year, my sixtieth, it is not becoming to be moved at anything; and so, as philosophy is always the thing one has when one wants it, I pretended to be very indifferent about going into the tower, and only scolded my footman for something that would not have made me peevish at any other time, which I think proves I am a true philosopher.

[1] Brother of the King of Sweden.—Walpole.

If you do not understand Monsieur Hubert's letter, Madam, how is it possible I should? You seem to have described me to him as an agreeable mixture of the continent Scipio and a member of the Hell-fire Club; nay, and to have bestowed two as uncommon ladies on me who were content without being in love with, and yet could pass a whole night in hearing very indelicate conversation. Dames more extraordinary certainly than Scipio himself! I am unfortunately of an age not to attempt to clear myself of the character of the chaste Roman, but I beg you will undeceive Monsieur Hubert about my licentious conversation, which I hope is not one of my faults. When you are in train of defending me, Madam, I beg you will also undeceive him about the shining merits he supposes in me. I hate to have anybody think better of me than I deserve; and I must say your Ladyship's partiality to me, at least your favour, is apt to rate me above the common run of men, which I know I am not.

I never had anything like a solid understanding on one side, or wit on the other. As a proof that I know my own level, you have always heard me speak with enthusiasm of Charles Townshend, George Selwyn, Charles Fox, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Gray, Mr. Gibbon, and of everybody of singular capacity or parts, which is seldom the case but of those who are conscious of having no pretensions; but this is growing too grave *à propos* to Mr. Hubert's wild letter. If I had wit, I should have laughed at it with some wit.

I am exceedingly inclined to come to Ampthill about the 24th. I have no exceptions to the party before as individuals, but as too numerous; besides I promised to go again to Park Place, and if I can walk tolerably by that time, think of going thither about the 18th or 19th for a couple of days, but I will neither embarrass them nor you with my gout, and will be sure it is gone before I frisk anywhere.

Oct. 15.

I received your postscript, and add one to mine. About the American news, I say what I always have thought and said, that whatever way this war ends, it will be fatal to this country. The liberty of America made it flourish to the prodigious height it did. If governed by an army, instead of inviting settlers and trade, it will be deserted and be a burthen to us, as Peru and Mexico, with all their mines, have been to Spain. The war has already drained us of men; if the army could be brought back, how many, between climate, and other chances, will return? Our ships are entering on

their third winter in those seas, and we have flung away in those three years what should have lessened our debt, and prepared against a war with France. The plea for the last peace was our inability of proceeding with the war. Are we in the condition we were in 1763? How soon we shall have a French war, I know not; it is much talked of already at Paris; but come when it will, then will be the moment of judging of this war with the Colonies. I believe France will then recover Canada, with interest; and for the East Indies, which our fleets, supported by our trade, obtained, I have always looked on them as a vision, which made us drunk with riches, which will be a burthen to maintain, and which will vanish like a scene in the Arabian tales. I have not less gloomy ideas of your Ireland, where, I conclude, the first storm will burst. I could carry my prophecy much further; but the present exultation speaks it all —nor does it surprise me. It is natural, I doubt, for the human heart to pass from despondency to intoxication; nor can one wonder. I believe it is the truest philosophy, to think only of the present moment. Chance is a more potent sovereign than foresight, which has no ways and means but probability to work with. I honour Chance, and beg her to contradict all my prophecies.

I heard the story of the Prince of Conti here, never from France: indeed, I heard two stories, one of the late Prince, another of the present, and know not which your Ladyship means. Neither sounded to me in the least probable. I still less know who the lady is, that is only indulged in feeding her horse with cherries—a luxury she cannot enjoy above one month in the twelve. As this is October, when I hear it, it puts me in mind of the late Duke of Cleveland, who though past twenty when his father was dying in December, was overjoyed, and said, "Now my mother must stay in my father's room, she cannot watch *me*, and I will go into the garden and get birds'-nests."

Mr. Conway has certainly marks of his disorder still, though not considerable. I hope to find him still more mended than he was.

1611. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, Thursday, Oct. 31, 1776.

Thank you for your letter. I send this by the coach. You will have found a new scene[1]—not an unexpected one by you and me,

[1] On the opening of the session.—Wright.

though I do not pretend I thought it so near. I rather imagined France would have instigated or winked at Spain's beginning with us. Here is a solution of the Americans declaring themselves independent. Oh! the folly, the madness, the guilt of having plunged us into this abyss! Were we and a few more endued with any uncommon penetration?—No: they who did not see as far, *would* not. I am impatient to hear the complexion of to-day. I suppose it will, on the part of administration, have been a wretched farce of fear, daubed over with airs of bullying. You, I do not doubt, have acted like yourself, feeling for our situation, above insulting, and unprovoked but at the criminality that has brought us to this pass. Pursue your own path, nor lean to the court that may be paid to you on either side, as I am sure you will not regard their being displeased that you do not go as far as their interested views may wish.

If the Court should receive any more of what they call good news, I think the war with France will be unavoidable. It was the victory at Long Island,[1] and the frantic presumption it occasioned, that has ripened France's measures; and now we are to awe them by pressing; an act that speaks our impotence!—which France did not want to learn!

I would have come to town, but I had declared so much I would not, that I thought it would look as if I came to enjoy the distress of the Ministers; but I do not enjoy the distress of my country. I think we are undone—I have always thought so; whether we enslaved America, or lost it totally: so we that were against the war could expect no good issue. If you do return to Park-place to-morrow, you will oblige me much by breakfasting here: you know it wastes you very little time.

I am glad I did not know of Mrs. Damer's sore throat till it is almost well. Pray take care and do not catch it.

Thank you for your care of me: I will not stay a great deal here, but at present I never was better in my life; and here I have no vexatious moments. I hate to dispute; I scorn to triumph myself, and it is very difficult to keep my temper when others do. I own I have another reason for my retirement, which is prudence. I have thought of it late, but, at least, I will not run into any new expense. It would cost me more than I care to afford to buy a house in town, unless I do it to take some of my money out of the Stocks, for which

[1] On the 27th of August, 1778, when the English army, under the command of General Howe, defeated the Americans at Flat Bush, in Long Island.—Wright.

I tremble a little. My brother is seventy; and if I live myself, I must not build too much on his life; and you know, if he fails, I lose the most secure part of my income.[1] I refused from [Lord] Holland, and last year from Lord North, to accept the place for my own life; and having never done a dirty thing, I will not disgrace myself at fifty-nine. I should like to live as well as I have done; but what I wish more, is to secure what I have already saved for those I would take care of after me. These are the true reasons of my dropping all thought of a better house in town, and of living so privately here. I will not sacrifice my health to my prudence; but my temper is so violent, that I know the tranquillity I enjoy here in solitude is of much more benefit to my health, than the air of the country is detrimental to it. You see I can be reasonable when I have time to reflect; but philosophy has a poor chance with me when my warmth is stirred; and yet I know, that an angry old man out of Parliament, and that can do nothing but be angry, is a ridiculous animal.

1612. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 1, 1776.

For three weeks you have been expecting accounts from New York: so have we; and so we are still. Nothing was come this morning; but we seem to be on the eve of another interlude, that will be full as serious as the chief piece. Very few days before the Parliament was to meet, nine or ten ships of the line were put into commission; and, on Tuesday, press-warrants were issued, and every appearance spoke war. The first reports were, that Spain was going to attack Portugal; and so it looks still: and, they say, by the obstinacy of the latter.

I do not know how, but the general opinion is, that, though Monsieur de Noailles[2] is just arrived, our preparations are made at least as much against France, as to support Portugal. Every port in France countenances these apprehensions; and our late success at Long Island does but make it probable that we shall not be suffered quietly to fetch over too many victories. The agent of the Colonies is openly countenanced at Versailles; and it is past a doubt that they are assisted and traded with. I hear this was urged yesterday, in both Houses, by the Opposition; and not denied. The King's

[1] That is, 1400*l.* a-year in the Customs.—Cunningham.
[2] The new Ambassador from France.—Walpole.

speech you will see; and I think it gainsays but very faintly all I tell you. The Opposition made a sort of protest against all the late measures, in a kind of address, that they would have substituted for that prepared by the Court: not expecting, to be sure, to carry it, but as their declaration. As I am here, I could not learn even these particulars in time to write to you by to-night's post. Indeed, what shall pass at present in Parliament will decide nothing. Parliament has done what, I think, it will never be able to undo; and it must excuse me if I do not honour its wisdom.

What a strange event in France! Monsieur Necker, a Protestant, and actually resident, from Geneva, made one of the Comptrollers of the Finances! What says your neighbour, Madame of Babylon?[1] but, poor old soul, she dares say nothing. Marshal Turenne's ghost will die for shame, that, with all his glory, he turned Catholic to make his court. A little Swiss banker will be above such meanness. No, I never disapproved your de-crowning Count Albany:[2] it became you: but I certainly have the utmost contempt for the Court of Rome, that denied him a title, of which his family had forfeited all the advantages for *their* cause. I am glad they did; for it shows how insignificant both he and they are. You never did mention the *démêlé* with Lord Cowper; and I could easily excuse it.

I still think Lady Lucy has a good chance of living, by holding out so long. Thank you much for your kindness to Mr. Giles.[3] I shall go to town on Sunday for a day or two, and if I hear any further news you shall know.

Arlington Street, Nov. 4.

At last the confirmation is come of New York being in possession of General Howe, having been abandoned by the provincials. Three thousand men sallied out of their lines, but were repulsed by three regiments, with little loss of life on either side, but thirteen or fourteen of the King's officers were wounded. Three days after Howe was in the town it was fired by some provincials, and a quarter of it burnt before the flames could be extinguished. Howe is now encamped within four miles of the enemy's lines. I don't know whether he means to attempt to force them, or whether they mean to make their stand now, or draw him up into the country. My

[1] Rome.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Pretender. Sir Horace Mann had remonstrated against his being received at Rome as King of England; and the Pope complied.—WALPOLE.

[3] A neighbour of Mr. Walpole at Twickenham, by whom he had written to Sir Horace.—WALPOLE.

opinion is, that if he gains any great advantage, it will but the sooner bring on a war with France, as it is natural to suppose they will not let us ever be quiet masters of America again, nor miss the present favourable opportunity of embarrassing us so considerably. However, I have no great faith in reasonings on future events, and much less on my own reasonings of that sort. When it is so difficult to trace back events to causes, the reverse must be much more fallible.

1613. TO THE EARL OF STRAFFORD.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 2, 1776.

Though inclination, and consciousness that a man of my age, who is neither in Parliament nor in business, has little to do in the world, keep me a good deal out of it, yet I will not, my dear Lord, encourage you in retirement; to which, for the interest of your friends, you have but too much propensity. The manners of the age cannot be agreeable to those who have lived in something soberer times; nor do I think, except in France, where old people are never out of fashion, that it is reasonable to tire those whose youth and spirits may excuse some dissipation. Above all things, it is my resolution never to profess retirement, lest, when I have lost all my real teeth, the imaginary one, called a colt's, should hurry me back and make me ridiculous. But one never outlives all one's contemporaries; one may assort with them. Few Englishmen, too, I have observed, can bear solitude without being hurt by it. Our climate makes us capricious, and we must rub off our roughness and humours against one another. We have, too, an always increasing resource, which is, that though we go not to the young, they must come to us: younger usurpers tread on their heels, as they did on ours, and revenge us that have been deposed. They may retain their titles, like Queen Christina, Sir M * * * N * * *, and Lord Rivers; but they find they have no subjects. If we could but live long enough, we should hear Lord Carlisle, Mr. Storer,[1] &c., complain of the airs and abominable hours of the youth of the age. You see, my dear Lord, my easy philosophy can divert itself with anything, even with visions; which perhaps is the best way of treating the great vision itself, life. For half one's time one should laugh *with* the world, the other half *at* it—and then it is hard if we want amusement.

[1] George Selwyn's correspondent.—Cunningham.

I am heartily glad, for your Lordship's and Lady Anne Conolly's sakes, that General[1] Howe is safe. I sincerely interest myself for everybody you are concerned for. I will say no more on a subject on which I fear I am so unlucky as to differ very much with your Lordship, having always fundamentally disapproved our conduct with America. Indeed, the present prospect of war with France, when we have so much disabled ourselves, and are exposed in so many quarters, is a topic for general lamentation, rather than for canvassing of opinions, which every man must form for himself: and I doubt the moment is advancing when we shall be forced to think alike, at least on the present.

I have not yet above a night at a time in town—but shall be glad to give your Lordship and Lady Strafford a meeting there whenever you please. Your faithful humble servant.

1614. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Nov. 13, 1776.

As next to sense and wit, I love nonsense; and as it is very convenient to love the last, especially if it will produce the second, I shall certainly indulge myself, since my quotation from a certain potion (which I do not think the most rational performance in the world) from a certain book gave occasion to your Ladyship to make an application of as much wit as ever I heard in my life; and yet so obvious an one that it is amazing it never struck anybody before. My Lord J. may comfort himself, for though he is very blind, you have discovered that if he had five more eyes, and all seven were as good as Argus's, they might prove no preservative. I sent you, on Monday, another piece of nonsense, and expect great returns from it, though you never can exceed your last quotation. You guessed very right too about Strawberry.

I have called this morning on Lady Warwick, but they are gone out of town again. News I found none, but that Mr. North is to marry Miss Egerton, with 100,000*l.* to begin the world with.

Yesterday, just after I arrived, I heard drums and trumpets, in Piccadilly: I looked out of the window and saw a procession with streamers flying. At first I thought it a press-gang, but seeing the corps so well drest, like Hussars, in yellow with blue waistcoats and

[1] General Sir William Howe, brother of the Admiral, was then commander-in-chief of the British forces in America. He was married to a daughter of Lady Anne Conolly, and consequently to a niece of Lord Strafford.—Wright.

breeches, and high caps, I concluded it was some new body of our allies, or a regiment newly raised, and with new regimentals for distinction. I was not totally mistaken, for the Colonel is *a new ally*. In short, this was a procession set forth by Mr. Bate,[1] Lord Lyttelton's chaplain, and author of the old *Morning Post*, and meant as an appeal to the town against his antagonist, the new one. I did not perceive it, but the musicians had masks; on their caps was written *The Morning Post*, and they distributed hand-bills. I am sure there were at least between thirty and forty, and this mummery must have cost a great deal of money. Are not we quite distracted, reprobate, absurd, beyond all people that ever lived? The *new* 'Morning Post,' I am told, for I never take in either, exceeds all the outrageous Billingsgate that ever was heard of. What a country! Does it signify what happens to it? Is there any sense, integrity, decency, taste, left? Are not we the most despicable nation upon earth, in every light? A solemn and expensive masquerade exhibited by a clergyman, in defence of daily scandal against women of the first rank, in the midst of a civil war! and while the labouring poor are torn from their families by press-gangs! and a foreign war is hanging over our heads! And everybody was diverted with this!—Do you think, Madam, that anything can save such a sottish and stupid nation? Does it deserve to be saved? you that have children will wish for miracles; as I have none but what Mary provides, I can almost wish we may be scourged. I pity the unborn, who were in the entail of happiness, but what can be said for those in present possession?

P.S. I return to-morrow to Strawberry.

1615. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Nov. 24, 1776.

I CANNOT tell you the particulars, as I am here, and have not yet learnt them; but there is another victory, a naval one, over the provincials on the Lake Champlain. They have lost their whole fleet, have burnt Crown Point, and are retired to Ticonderago, where, I think, they are besieged. You will see the particular circumstances in the papers, as soon as I could hear and tell them.

[1] The Reverend Henry Bate, who in 1784 took the name of Dudley, was created a Baronet in 1815, and died in 1824 without issue. See Boswell, Ed. 'Croker,' p. 763. —CUNNINGHAM.

General Howe, it is said, finding the lines at King's Bridge too strong, is drawing others between them and New York. Some say he is meditating or executing a diversion; at the same time there is a pretty general opinion that he is negotiating a peace.

You, perhaps, are still more inquisitive about the appearance of war in Europe. If I were an ambassador myself, I could not answer you more unsatisfactorily, which, if I spoke in a character, would be called mysteriously or enigmatically; but my reason is founded, as perhaps it is sometimes in your profession, on ignorance. The outward and visible signs are all martial. Equipment of a fleet, pressing of sailors, and the nomination of an Admiral: so much for Bellona. On the other hand, France says she has no thoughts of war, and our Ministers declare that they believe her. For her amusement, indeed, she makes great naval preparations, and some say, does not frown on the Americans, nor on their resident, Silas Deane. *Nous verrons.*

If you should ask what the Opposition says,—I answer, nothing. They have abandoned Parliament, and some are gone into the country, and some to Paris: not to confer with Mr. Deane, but to see horse-races,—of which we have none here!

After so much negative information, I can tell you one event: Lord Rockingham is made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Being a little unfortunate generally in my prophecies and conjectures, I choose to foretell that he will be the most humble, sweet-tempered, generous, and profound Governor that ever that island was blessed with yet.

I forgot to say, that it is not Lord Bristol who commands the fleet, but Admiral Keppel. He is in the Opposition, but they being at leisure, he was appointed.

Arlington Street, Nov. 26.

You will see the particulars of the naval victory in the Gazette. It is not much valued here, as it is thought Carleton must return to Quebec for the winter. The idea of negotiation gains ground—that of war declines, for we hear Grimaldi, the Spanish Minister, has resigned, and he was reckoned no friend of ours; but pray, never mind what I say in the future tense, in which I have no skill at all. We know past times very imperfectly, and how should we, when few know even the present, and they who do, have good reasons for not being communicative? I have lived till I think I know nothing at all.

1616. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 1, 1776.

I DON'T know who the Englishwoman is of whom you give so ridiculous a description; but it will suit thousands. I distrust my age continually, and impute to it half the contempt I feel for my countrymen and women. If I think the other half well-founded, it is by considering what must be said hereafter of the present age. What is to impress a great idea of us on posterity? In truth, what do our contemporaries of all other countries think of us? They stare at and condemn our politics and follies; and if they retain any respect for us, I doubt it is for the sense we have had. I do know, indeed, one man who still worships us, but his adoration is testified so very absurdly, as not to do us much credit. It is a Monsieur de Marchais, first Valet-de-Chambre to the King of France. He has the *Anglomanie* so strong, that he has not only read more English than French books, but if any valuable work appears in his own language, he waits to peruse it till it is translated into English; and to be sure our translations of French are admirable things!

To do the rest of the French justice, I mean such as like us, they adopt only our egregious follies, and in particular the flower of them, horse-racing! *Le Roi Pepin*, a racer, is the horse in fashion. I suppose the next shameful practice of ours they naturalize, will be the personal scurrilities in the newspapers, especially on young and handsome women, in which we certainly are originals! Voltaire, who first brought us into fashion in France, is stark mad at his own success. Out of envy to writers of his own nation, he cried up Shakspeare; and now is distracted at the just encomiums bestowed on that first genius of the world in the new translation. He sent to the French Academy an invective that bears all the marks of passionate dotage. Mrs. Montagu[1] happened to be present when it was read. Suard, one of their writers, said to her, "Je crois, Madame, que vous êtes un peu fâché de ce que vous venez d'entendre." She replied, "Moi, Monsieur! point du tout! Je ne suis pas amie de Monsieur Voltaire." I shall go to town the day after to-morrow, and will add a postscript, if I hear any news.

Dec. 3*rd.*

I am come late, have seen nobody, and must send away my letter.

[1] Mrs. Robinson Montagu, who wrote the defence of Shakspeare against Voltaire.—WALPOLE.

1617. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 3, 1776.

I SHOULD not have waited for a regular response, Madam, if I had not been precisely in the same predicament with your Ladyship, reduced to write from old books to tell you any thing new. I have been three days at Strawberry, and have not seen a creature but Sir John Hawkins's five volumes, the two last of which, thumping as they are, I literally did read in two days. They are old books to all intents and purposes, very old books; and what is new, is like old books, too, that is, full of minute facts that delight antiquaries: nay, if there had never been such things as parts and taste, this work would please every body. The first volume is extremely worth looking *at*, for the curious fac-similes of old music and old instruments, and so is the second. The third is very heavy; the two last will amuse you, I think, exceedingly, at least they do me.

My friend, Sir John, is a matter-of-fact-man, and does now and then stoop very low in quest of game. Then he is so exceedingly religious and grave as to abhor mirth, except it is printed in the old black letter, and then he calls the most vulgar ballad pleasant and full of humour. He thinks nothing can be sublime but an anthem, and Handel's choruses heaven upon earth. However he writes with great moderation, temper, and good sense, and the book is a very valuable one. I have begged his Austerity to relax in one point, for he ranks comedy with farce and pantomime. Now I hold a perfect comedy to be the perfection of human composition, and believe firmly that fifty Iliads and Æneids could be written sooner than such a character as Falstaff's. Sir John says that Dr. Wallis discovered that they who are not charmed with music, want a nerve in their brain. This would be dangerous anatomy. I should swear Sir John wants the comic nerve; and by parity of reason, we should ascribe new nerves to all those who have bad taste, or are delighted with what others think ridiculous. We should have nerves like Romish saints to preside over every folly; and Mr. Cosmo must have a nerve which I hope Dr. Wallis would not find in 50,000 dissections. Rechin, too, had a sort of nerve that is lost like the music of the ancients; yet, perhaps, the royal *touch* could revive it more easily than it cures the Evil.

4th.

The quarrel between the SS. Cosmo and Damian, they say, is at an end. I kept back my letter in hopes of something to tell your Ladyship, but there is a universal yawn, and the town as empty as in August. I heard only a good story of Mrs. Boscawen, the admiral's widow, who lives near London, and came to town as soon as she had dined at her country hour. She said, I expected to find every body at dinner, but instead of that, I found all the young ladies strolling about the streets, and not thinking of going home to dress for dinner; so I had set out in the evening, and yet got to town in the morning of the same day.

I shall stay here for Mr. Mason's 'Caractacus' that is to be acted on Friday, and then return to my Hill.

1618. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Dec. 9, 1776.

I KNOW you love an episcopal print, and, therefore, I send you one of two, that have just been given to me. As you have time and patience, too, I recommend you to peruse Sir John Hawkins's History of Music. It is true, there are five huge volumes in quarto, and perhaps you may not care for the expense; but surely you can borrow them in the University, and, though you may, no more than I, delight in the scientific, there is so much about cathedral service, and choirs, and other old matters, that I am sure you will be amused with a great deal, particularly the last two volumes, and the fac-similes of old music in the first. I doubt it is a work that will not sell rapidly, but it must have a place in all great libraries.

1619. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 17, 1776.

IT is not from being made Archbishop of York that I write by a secretary [Kirgate], Madam; but because my right hand has lost its cunning. It has had the gout ever since Friday night, and I am overjoyed with it, for there is no appearance of its going any farther. I came to town on Sunday in a panic, concluding I should be bed-rid for three months, but I went out last night, and think I shall be

able in a few days to play upon the guitar if I could play upon it at all.

I know very little, but that for want of Parliament General Burgoyne is at this moment making an oration from the rostrum to the citizens of Westminster, in recommendation of Lord Petersham; and that Doctor Franklin, at seventy-two, is arrived in a frigate at Nantes, and has brought in two prizes that he took in his way. He was to be at Paris on Saturday night. He left everything quiet in America on the 30th of October, and I have been just told that letters are come from Lord Howe of the 13th of November, in which he asks for some more cables, and says he has written by another ship that is not arrived.

I have seen the picture of 'St. George,' and approve the Duke of Bedford's head, and the exact likeness of Miss Vernon,[1] but the attitude is mean and foolish, and expresses silly wonderment. But of all, delicious is a picture of a little girl of the Duke of Buccleuch, who is overlaid with a long cloak, bonnet, and muff, in the midst of the snow, and is perishing blue and red with cold, but looks so smiling, and so good-humoured, that one longs to catch her up in one's arms and kiss her till she is in a sweat and squalls.

My hand has not a word more to say.

1620. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Dec. 20, 1776.

I CANNOT write to you myself, my dear Sir, for I have the gout in my right hand and wrist, and feel enough of it about me to fear that it will make its general tour; which by this third year's experience, seems to have grown annual instead of biennial: however, I am still so partial to the bootikins, as to believe that it is they that save me

[1] This picture, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, was painted for Mr. Rigby. The attitude of Miss Vernon is, as Walpole here says, affected. That of Lord William Russell illustrates the genius of Sir Joshua. The story is told, that the boy was unwilling to stand still for his portrait, and running about the room, crouched in a corner to avoid it. Sir Joshua, at once seizing the possibility of painting him so, said, "Well, stay there, my little fellow," and drew him in a natural position of fear at the dragon.

This group of portraits, which is commonly called 'The Bedford Family,' is not in the possession of the descendants of any one of the subjects of it. Mr. Rigby intended to leave it to the late Duke of Bedford, and having mentioned his intention, afterwards told his Grace that he might send for it. The Duke, from delicacy, which Mr. Rigby appears to have construed as indifference, omitted to do so, and it was given to Mr. Drummond of the Grange, from whose hands it has since passed into Lord Jersey's, at Middleton Park, where it now is.—R. VERNON SMITH.

from having near so much pain as other gouty people complain of; and, while I do not suffer much, there is no great hardship in an old man's being confined to his own house. It is not, however, to talk of myself that I send you this! but to tell you that I have received your letter for Lord North, and as I could not carry it myself, I sent it to him by a friend, and do not doubt but so just a request will be attended to.

It looks very much as if we should know soon whether America is to be subdued or saved by a French war. We heard on Tuesday last that Dr. Franklin himself was landed in France—no equivocal step; and on Wednesday came a full explanation. General Howe had made two movements, which threatened enclosing Washington, and cutting him off from his magazines: a small engagement ensued, in which the Americans were driven from a post without much loss on either side. Washington has since retired with his whole army to other heights, about five miles off, seeming to intend to protract the war, as was always thought would be their wisest way; but, as the Americans do not behave very heroically, and as the King's fleet will now be masters of the coast, it is supposed that Washington must retire northward, and that the Howes will make great progress in the south, if not prevented by the rigour of the season. As nearly as I can make out, Dr. Franklin must have sailed a day or two after Washington's retreat;[1] and therefore it is natural to conclude that he is come to tell France, that she must directly interpose and protect the Americans, or that the Americans must submit to such terms as they can obtain. If I am not wrong in my reasons, the question is thus brought to a short issue, and there I leave it. I am never fond of speculations, and not at all so when I am not quite well. Adieu!

[1] Washington's retreat took place about the 20th of October, and Dr. Franklin sailed from Philadelphia on the 26th, and reached Paris on the 21st of December. Madame du Deffand, in a letter to Walpole of the 18th, says, "The object of M. Franklin's visit remains a problem; and, what is still more singular, nobody can tell whether he is actually in Paris or not. For the last three or four days, we have been told in the morning that he had arrived, and in the evening that he had not yet come." On the 22nd she again wrote, "Yesterday Franklin arrived at two in the afternoon. He slept the night before at Versailles. He was accompanied by two of his grandsons, one seven years old, the other seventeen, and by his friend, M. Penet. He has taken lodgings in the Rue de l'Université."—WRIGHT.

1621. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Dec. 23, 1776.

I KNOW, Madam, I ought to have thanked your ladyship immediately for your very friendly letter, but I have been too much out of order even to dictate. Though just now I am out of pain, I am so unwell that I conclude there is a mass of gout moulding itself for the rest of my limbs, though hitherto it has kept closely to my right arm. I did most assuredly intend to be at Ampthill this Christmas, and my project was to have asked you last Tuesday when it should be. I heartily repent that I did not make my visit when I was able: I ought to have remembered that I must take time by the forelock, especially considering how few hairs are left in that lock for me.

The party you are so good as to propose to me, Madam, would be very agreeable, indeed, if it could do anything but tantalise me; and I am sad company for the young or healthful. I must not think of going any whither but with Wolsey's speech in my mouth, "Father abbot, I am come to lay my weary bones amongst you!" I am sure I have nothing else to carry!

So, the Howes did not think their prodigious victory worth writing a line about! They little know that if they did but send us a bantam egg we can hatch an ostrich from it. I do not know what ardour anybody may have to confer with Dr. Franklin, but I do not believe the Doctor will condescend to be at home to an Englishman. They say Lord S. took infinite pains for an interview with Silas Dean; and when he did at last bring it about, he might as well have obtained a personal audience from the Grand Signior without an interpreter.

As I have no resource but in quartos in the few moments when I can do any thing, I am reading the Life of Philip II., by a Professor of St. Andrews. I sent for it to see how a Scotchman would celebrate the barbarities of Philip, Cardinal Granville, and the Duke of Alva, in the United Provinces; but to my utter astonishment the man does not, as most biographers do, when they write the life of a Charles I., or a Richard III., fall in love with his hero. On the contrary, he is so just and explicit, that I believe even Dr. Franklin would admit him to kiss his hand. But I have read only the first volume: the author may come about: the second tome of many a man is a contradiction to his first. Adieu, Madam, I wish I could distribute all the happiness I miss upon your Christmas.

1622. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Jan. 1, 1777.

If pain and total helplessness are illness, I was, indeed, very bad, my dear Madam, when I despatched my last note to Ampthill. I think my disorder had its crisis on Sunday. By the help of quieting draughts, I have had three good nights since, and not much pain. As I feel no new attack any where else, I begin to venture to flatter myself that my feet will escape; and for my hands, they must wait for the pity of the weather before they can recover. I should not have said so much on myself, but to excuse my having said so little in gratitude for your Ladyship's letters.

Till Monday, I was able to see nobody at all, and now that I should be glad to see a few, there is not a soul in town to come. Mr. Gibbon, who called yesterday, is gone to Sussex [Lord Sheffield's] to-day for a fortnight. I told him, I could not conceive how anybody that has not the gout, and might go to Ampthill, could go anywhere else.

Lady Paine, who called here last Friday night with Lady Lucan, when I was not able to receive them, was taken ill that very night, and has been in great danger ever since: the message this morning is a little more favourable; everybody that knows her must be in great pain for her. I am in hopes George [Selwyn] will arrive from Bath to-night, and the Beauclerks in about a week. If I have no return, I shall be able, probably, in some few days, to write a line or two with my own hand, and be in better spirits, which are not quite recovered yet.

1623. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

January 7, 1777.

I begin a letter, Madam, long before it will get into its chaise, because being as slow an operation as engraving, I must take due time, or you will arrive in town before it sets out. That I am at all recovered is a prodigy in such weather: perhaps the gout is frozen, and my pains may return on a thaw. At present I am tolerably free, but still have a bootikin on each hand, and write with a bear's paw.

I saw long ago the passage your Ladyship took the trouble to

transcribe. To be cited so honourably by Voltaire would be flattering, indeed, if he had not out of envy taken pains to depreciate all the really great authors of his own country, and of this; and what sort of judgment is that which decries Shakspeare and commends *me?*

I have seen Mr. Crawfurd twice, which I think a great deal, considering how little he can be entertained here, and that he is sure I will join him in no Io Pæans. In truth, I know there is a great deal of water mixed with the wine of all the late bumpers; nay, I believe, Echo will still drink her glass.

January 8.

I have just got an account of Lord Villiers's play. It went off to admiration; and 'Le Texier,' which, I believe, was inimitable. Indeed, considering what an Iceland night it was, I concluded the company and audience would all be brought to town in waggons petrified, and stowed in a statuary's yard in Piccadilly. Has your Ladyship dipped into Mr. Ayscough's 'Semiramis?' Read it you could not; it is the very worst of all our late trash. Mr. Colman says, it is Voltaire "a-scue," I know not how to spell that word. My poor hand will not let me say any more, and news I know none.

1624. TO THE EARL OF OSSORY.

January 8, 1777.

I was very sorry, my dear Lord, that it was too late to write to you last night when I heard the news, that I might immediately make you easy about your friends. It was past eleven when Mrs. Howe, at Lady Hertford's, received a note to tell her that Mud Island was taken *December 2nd,* and that only four men were killed and five wounded. This shows that the former accounts of the capture, and of the slaughter, were totally false. I know nothing more, but conclude the Americans had abandoned the fort, and very probably are gone to New York. The belief of a French war is far from decreasing.

Duke Hamilton most assuredly marries Miss Burrell.

Lady George Germaine was given over yesterday; was rather better at night, but is not so to-day.

I say nothing about myself, for I am ashamed. The severe colds and fogs frighten me, and I doubt will bring the gout whether I

stir or not: I have twice thought it actually come; but it uses me like a coquette that will not part with one, though she does not care for anything but the power. The gout, that can make conquests only of the aged, is still more jealous. I had promised myself a most comfortable week at Ampthill, but I find that the few visions I had left, must vanish like all the rest! A clock has struck that wakes one from dreams!

P.S. After dinner.

I have now seen the office account. It says Mud Island was taken on the 15th of *November;* so I suppose the note to Mrs. Howe mistook the date of the letters for that of the surrender; but I am sure of what was in the note, for Lady Mary Coke read it twice with all her importance of accent. The Americans abandoned the fort the night of the attack, leaving all their cannon and stores, and having lost, says the Office, four hundred men. Lord Cornwallis, on the 10th, having passed the Delaware, and being joined by Sir T. Wilson with the troops from New York, attacked Red Bank, which the Provincials abandoned too, and left their cannon and stores; so, if you believe authority, they do nothing but supply the King's troops. Sir W. Howe intended to march immediately to Washington, who was at White Marsh; but as his letters are dated *December* 1st, and he had taken the island on the 15th, his *immediately* had lasted a fortnight.

I have just received Lady Ossory's, but have not time to answer it.

1625. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Saturday, 8 *in the evening of your public day.*

Solitude of solitudes! all is solitude. I am justly punished, Madam, for leaving the most agreeable place in the world, and two and a half persons for whom I have the greatest regard, to come to a place where grass would grow in the streets, if this summer it would grow anywhere. Even Lady Hertford is gone, and I suppose my Lady Townshend is on the wing. The former, I conclude, is at Wakefield races, for she does not return till Monday. In short, I have repacked up my nightcap, and am hurrying to Strawberry, only staying to do you justice on myself, and sign my confession. I was as unlucky at Luton; I sent in a memorial, begging only to

see the chapel—the lord was not at home, and admittance was denied.

As I do not take the 'St. James's Evening Post,' nor think my own works worth twopence, pray send me, if there appears, any answer to Jocasta.

On my table I found a deprecation from the Secretary of the Antiquaries, but I intend to be obdurate. Having antiquarian follies enough of my own, I cannot participate of Whittington and his Cat.

You may believe, Madam, that I cannot have heard any news, having seen no soul but my maid Mary. A million of thanks for all your goodness to me; I do not deserve it, and I would blush at it, if that was not too common a sacrifice with me to merit being laid on your altar.

NOBLE JEFFERY,

A POEM IN THE PRIMITIVE STYLE,

HUMBLY INSCRIBED

TO

THE MOST HONOURABLE LADY ANNE, COUNTESS OF UPPER OSSORY,

BY THOMAS TRUEMAN, GENT.

Jeffery was a noble wight,
I will tell you all his story;
It may chance to please you much,
If it happens not to bore ye.

He was not extremely rich,
Though his birth was very great;
Yet he did for nothing want,
When he got a good estate.

Of good manners he the pink was,
And so humble with the great,
That he always stood uncover'd
But when he put on his hat.

To his servants he was gentle,
After his good father's fashion,
And was never known to scold
But when he was in a passion.

Bacchus was our hero's idol;
And, my lady, would you think it?
He, to show his taste in wine,
Thought the best way was to drink it.

Galen's sons he seldom dealt with,
Having neither gout nor phthisic,
Nor evacuations used
But when he had taken physic.

More for pastime than for lucre
Cards and dice would Jeffery use;
Nor at either was unlucky,
Unless it was his chance to lose.

A beautiful and virtuous lady
Crown'd the bliss of Jeffery's life;
And when he became her spouse,
She also became his wife.

Five short years with her he pass'd:
Had it been as much again,
As she brought him children five,
Perhaps she might have brought him ten.

Jeffery was extremely comely,
Made exactly to a T;
And no doubt had had no equal,
Had there been no men but he.

Great and various were his talents;
He could speak and could compose;
And in verse had often written,
But that he always wrote in prose.

In music few excelled our Jeffery;
No man had a lighter finger;
And if he had but had a voice,
He would have made a charming singer.

In optics Jeffery had great knowledge,
And could prove as clear as light
That all diseases of the eyes
Are very hurtful to the sight.

Jeffery's nurse had told his fortune;
And it happen'd, as said she,
That he would expire at land,
If he did not die at sea.

At land he died the very day
On which deceased his loving wife:
And more I know, the day he died
Was the last day of all his life.

JEFFERY'S EPITAPH.

Here Jeffery lies, who all the dead survived,
And ne'er had died if he had never lived.

1626. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

January 15, 1777.

An invalid's room is commonly a coffee-house, and as I know no news, I must suppose there is none. Indeed, the town is so empty, that my circles have been small; but then there are so few of those I wish to see in town, that I have asked nobody, but trusted to chance customers. My right hand is still a good deal swelled, and has not yet moulted its covering. Loyalty and love of dress will bring up the world by Saturday. When will anything bring your Ladyship and Lord Ossory? Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Fox were

to leave Paris last Sunday; perhaps they may wait to see the Emperor.

Sir Ralph Paine made me a visit t'other day, and not knowing what to say to him, I asked him how he liked his new house in Grafton Street; he replied, its *centricality* made it very agreeable.

It is scarce decent to send such a scrap as a letter, but I protest I have nothing to add to it. I am so glad to be able to move my fingers again, that I should be proud to fill a sheet. Your Ladyship, I know, will excuse me, and take me as I happen. In any case, I shall rejoice to exchange seeing you, for writing.

P.S. I have a charming story about Madame du Deffand and Dr. Franklin, that will divert your Ladyship, but I have neither time nor fingers for it now.

1627. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Sunday, January 19, 1777.

You may imagine, Madam, how much I was touched with Lady Anne's sensibility for me! and to give you some proof of mine, the very next reflection was, that I was sorry she promises to have so much. It is one of those virtues, whose kingdom is not of this world, but, like patience, is for ever tried, with the greater disadvantage of wanting power to remedy half the misfortunes it feels for. Sensibility is one of the master-springs, on which most depends the colour of our lives, and determines our being happy or miserable. I have often said, that this world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel; and sensibility has not only occasion to suffer for others, but is sure of its own portion too. Had I children, and the option of bestowing dispositions on them, I should be strangely puzzled to decide. Could one refuse them feelings that make them amiable, or confer what insures unhappiness? But indeed on what could one decide, were the fate of others or one's own left to our arbitrement?

I have no opinion of my own wisdom, and little of any body's else; but I have an odd system, that what is called *chance* is the instrument of Providence and the secret agent that counteracts what men call wisdom, and preserves order and regularity, and continuation in the whole; for you must know, Madam, that I firmly believe, notwithstanding all our complaints, that almost every person upon earth tastes upon the totality more happiness

than misery; and therefore, if we could correct the world to our fancies, and with the best intentions imaginable, probably we should only produce more misery and confusion. This totally contradicts what I said before, that sensibility or insensibility determines the complexion of our lives; and yet if the former casts a predominating shade of sadness over the general tenour of our feelings, still that gloom is illumined with delicious flashes. It enjoys the comforts of the compassion it bestows, and of the misfortune it relieves; and the largest dose of the apathy of insensibility can never give any notion of the transport that thrills through the nerves of benevolence when it consoles the anguish of another; but I am too much a sceptic to pretend to make or reconcile a system and its contradictions. *No* man was ever yet so great as to build that system in which other men could not discover flaws. All our reasoning, therefore, is very imperfect, and this is *my* reason for being so seldom serious, and for never disputing. I look upon human reason, as I do on the parts of a promising child—it surprises, may improve or stop short, but is not come to maturity; and therefore, if you please, I will talk of the Birth-day, and things more suited to my capacity.

I had a shining circle on the evening of that great solemnity; the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, Lady Pembroke, Lady Strafford, Mr. Conway, and Lady Ailesbury, in all their gorgeous attire. Lady Warwick, I hear, looked charmingly: but pray, Madam, must you, to possess Miss Vernon to the last minute, lock her and yourself up in the country? You make no answer to my question of when you come. I can allow you but one week more. I propose to take the air on Thursday and Friday, to air myself at Strawberry, on Saturday and Sunday, and be ready on the Monday to wait on you, in Grosvenor Place.

Lord Dillon told me this morning that Lord Besborough and he, playing at quinze t'other night with Miss Pelham, and happening to laugh, she flew into a passion and said, "It was terrible to play with *boys!*" and our two ages together, said Lord Dillon, make up above a hundred and forty.

Sir George Warren lost his diamond order in the Council Chamber at the Birth-day in the crowd of loyal subjects. Part of Georgia is said to be returned to its allegiance to King George and Lord George. Charles Fox, I just hear, is arrived, and, I conclude, Mr. Fitzpatrick. My awkward hand has made a thousand blots, but I cannot help it.

Sunday night.

Mr. Fitzpatrick is not come; but, I hope, what I hear is not true, that he is going to America.

Monday.

A person has just been here, and told me terrible news: an express is come that yesterday morning all Bristol was in flames, and that Elliot's horse is sent thither! How dreadful! This comes of teaching the Americans to burn towns! It will be a blessed war before it is over.

1628. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Jan. 24, 1777.

In my last, a month ago, I told you I had the gout. It is now gone, and I have been once out to take the air. As I love to make the best of everything, I call this a short and favourable fit, having, from its first moment to my airing, lasted *but* six weeks; and, though I had it in both hands, wrists, and elbows, there was not much pain for above thirty hours; and my feet escaped. These *douceurs* I attribute to the bootikins. It is true that, for the last three years, the fits have been annual, instead of biennial; but if they are split into more frequent, though much shorter portions, I must still be satisfied; for could *I* go through five months and a half of pain? I am already so shattered with these attacks, that my nerves are as alarmable as the sensitive plant. The clapping of a door makes me start and tremble; and yet I don't find my spirits affected. In fact, my inside is so strong, and the case so very weak, that I believe the cottage will tumble down, and I shall have nothing but the inside left. I am thinking of going to Bath or to the sea-side, which has often been of service; not, to say the truth, that I suppose it will, but one is to try, and to pretend to suppose it will. Old people always talk as if they expected cures—but surely they cannot; surely they cannot forget how they used to laugh at their seniors who had such idle hopes! But enough, and too much of myself.

The tide of victories continues: Fort Washington was taken at the end of the year, and Rhode Island since. A great deal is still to do, and not much less if the war was over. It does not appear yet that Dr. Franklin has persuaded France to espouse America

openly. One hears a great deal of underhand support, and in general the disposition of the French for war with us; but I never believe but on facts, seldom reports, and seldomer prophecies and conjectures; chance being the great mistress of human affairs in the *dernier ressort.*

The Parliament is met, but, as the Opposition does not attend, for these last two days they could not get a House of one hundred members; which is necessary, since Mr. Grenville's Bill, if an election is to be heard. We were alarmed on Sunday with an account of Bristol being in flames, and of several attempts to fire that city and Portsmouth. It turns out almost nothing at all, and not above the pitch of insurers. There was a silly story of two new-invented engines for firing being found in the lodgings of the supposed incendiary, together with an account of the St. Barthelemi and Dr. Price's pamphlet for the Americans.[1] If true, it indicated a madman.

Your lord paramount, the Emperor,[2] is coming to Paris: he does not come hither—he needs not. We have transplanted the flowers of our follies thither—horse-racing and gaming; and our chief missionaries preside over the rites. My poor hand is so weak that you must dispense with my writing you no longer a letter. For eight days I underwent the humiliation of being fed; and, when one comes to one's pap again, no wonder one thinks one's self ancient. Adieu!

1629. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

January 26, 1777.

Give me leave to say your Ladyship quite misunderstood one paragraph in my last. Never was anything farther from my thoughts than to accuse you of keeping your sisters too long in the country. Where upon earth could they be so well as under your care? Who

[1] This celebrated pamphlet was entitled 'Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America.' It was circulated with profusion, and, for writing it, the Common Council of London voted the Doctor their thanks, and presented him with the freedom of the city in a gold box. Being translated into the Dutch language, it is supposed to have influenced the Hollanders in withdrawing their property from the British funds. It was repeatedly quoted in both Houses.—Wright.

[2] Joseph II., Emperor of Germany and brother of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, arrived at Paris in the middle of April. Under the name of Count Falkenstein he lived and travelled like a very private gentleman.—Wright.

would take such care of them? Who would educate and form them so well? Where could they lead so rational and at the same time so agreeable a life? And where would they be farther from seeing or hearing anything that would pervert their minds? And pray where could they be witnesses to more sensible felicity? Do you imagine, Madam, that I think it necessary that they should be married at fifteen in order to enlarge the circle of some Machiavelian aunt's political influence? Indeed I had no such idea; and, begging the pardon of the young ladies, they were not concerned in my question.

It was your Ladyship was my object: I meant to ask if you intended to stay at Ampthill as long as you could keep Miss Vernon there. With all the encomiums you shower on me, it is plain I do not express myself intelligibly. As to sensible letters, I will never write one. I declare I don't know what is sense, and what not. I have lived to doubt whether I have any one just and right idea about anything. Nothing I thought truth and sense from my infancy seems any longer to be so. All the virtues that were crowned with palms in Greek, Roman, and English story pass for errors. I thought that liberty, for which England has struggled and fought for seven hundred years, was natural and dear to Englishmen. No such thing. I have seen a popish Rebellion crushed in Scotland, and half England enraged at the Duke of Cumberland for saving them from chains. I now see all England exulting on every defeat of their own countrymen, who are fighting for our liberty as well as their own; and can I think I have any sense? Ought not I to believe that Mr. Locke was an old woman, and that we ought to say in our political litany as we do in our religious, *thy service is perfect freedom!* No, Madam, no: I have done with sense, though too old to learn the folly in fashion. I have often been of opinion that it was not designed we should be able to distinguish certainly *what is truth.* Pilate asked the person most likely to resolve him; and received no answer. I will therefore wait with patience; it will not be such a vast while, till the time that our doubts will be cleared up. Till then, pray allow me to stick to my old-fashioned nonsense; for though the sense of the age is so much improved, I don't think its nonsense is; and, besides, it is more becoming to an old man to dote in his own way, than to adopt the follies of a much more recent generation, which never sit well upon him,—at least they would not on me. I do not say that there are not old gentlemen that can cast their skins, and come out at three

score as sleek as Adonis. Lord George Germaine can look as well as Alexander, in laurels gathered by proxy, or rather like Queen Eleanor, could sink at Charing-cross, and rise at *King*-Hithe. I am no such didapper; and if it is only for the singularity, will die as I lived with all my old errors and prejudices about me.

Lord Ossory has been exceedingly charitable, though I was an errant beggar, for I put off my frisk to Strawberry for two days on purpose to see more of him. I tell your Ladyship nothing, for he will tell you all—if there is anything, which is more than I know. I send you some French books by him for the remainder of your solitude. I am sorry to quit mine, though latterly I have had company enough; but it is comfortable to sit at home, and see as many as one wishes; and still more comfortable *just now*, to see very few of those one dislikes. In short, not to be often wished joy of what one is very sorry for! and, alas! I am too old to go to France, and find many people that love liberty, though perhaps I must go thither if I desire to preserve my own. It is very indifferent where one ends, provided one is consistent. I look with scorn and horror on change of principles: it is a proof one never had any, if interest is the alternative. If this country loses its freedom, how will the names of all those who sacrificed it be execrated by their posterity! by their posterity in chains, or in the Bastille!

P.S. I must beg to have my books again.

1630. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Feb. 6, 1777.

After a confinement of seven weeks, I begin to go about again. I feel no great joy in my liberty; and, had I any excuse for bringing people to me, I should not feel concerned to live at home; for all England is a public place, and nothing so difficult to find as any private society. Everything is changed; as always must happen when one grows old, and is prejudiced to one's old ways. I do not like dining at nearly six, nor beginning the evening at ten at night. If one does not conform, one must live alone; and that is more disagreeable and more difficult in town than in the country, where old useless people ought to live. Unfortunately, the country does not agree with me; and I am sure it is not fancy; for my violent partiality to Strawberry Hill cannot be imposed upon. I am per-

suaded that it is the dampness of this climate that gives me so much gout; and London, from the number of fires and inhabitants, must be the dryest spot in the nation.

There is nothing new of any sort. As there is no Opposition, there is no Parliament; I mean none that is talked of more than the Assizes. In America the campaign seems to be over. It is to be very warm next summer; but there will be a spring between of some consequence. Then will be seen what we are to expect from France. Your brother, the Emperor, has put off his journey thither: some think, rebuffed from Versailles; others, that storms are brewing in the North, or deaths[1] approaching that will open the floodgates. I but just touch these points; for I have no private intelligence from every Court in Europe. I can see very little way into futurity, and when I think I do, I am commonly mistaken. That this country is stark mad in every respect, I am very clear; a death that great countries are apt to die of. I have but few years to come, have no children to leave, and therefore it is no wonder that the natural insensibility of age increases upon me, as well as the disposition to censure and to augur ill. In common life one thinks many persons dying before they do die—yet they do die too. One is still more in the right, though perhaps not so soon as one expects to be, when one foretells that such an one will kill himself by his intemperance. Some will think that, as our doctors have given us over, there is a better chance of our recovering. It is true, I have no opinion of our doctors—the Opposition; still I think the patient is in a most deplorable way, and, as in consumptions, he has no sense of his danger. Look you: all this may be speculation and vision; I do not trouble myself about the credit of my oracle. If I did, I could give two sides to my prophecy, and could tell you, that if things did not turn out very ill one way, they would another; and I could support my belief with an oath: but I am pretty indifferent about the matter when I cannot help it, and have no more notion of caring about what will happen ten years after I am dead, than about what will happen two hundred. We have been in an unnatural state, and swelled from a little island to an empire; but I doubt the island will not shrink just into its natural corpulency again; and there is a new field for speculation! But I am, luckily, at the end of my paper.

[1] Probability of the death of the King of Prussia.—WALPOLE.

1631. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 17, 1777.

I do not know whether you will value the execution of a promise, when the letter is observed and not the spirit. I write only because you desired it, and that I said I would; neither the literary nor political world furnish much matter. I have read the Goat's beard: the lines on Charles II. are very good, and there is true humour here and there; but the humour is often missed, and I think the whole much too long—it is far inferior to 'Variety.' Mr. Tyrrwhit has at last published the Bristol poems. He does not give up the antiquity, yet fairly leaves everybody to ascribe them to Chatterton, if they please, which I think the internal evidence must force every one to do, unless the amazing prodigy of Chatterton's producing them should not seem a larger miracle than Rowley's and Canning's anticipation of the style of very modern poetry. Psalmanazar alone seems to have surpassed the genius of Chatterton, and when that lad could perform such feats, as he certainly did, what difficulty is there in believing that Macpherson forged the cold skeleton of an epic poem, that is more insipid than 'Leonidas?' Mr. Tyrrwhit seems to have dreaded drawing himself into a controversy, which joys me, who dreaded being drawn into one too.

The news from America are, as usual, difficult to be fathomed. The Court denies being certain of the discomfit of the Hessians, yet their runners pretend that the Hessian prisoners have been retaken. It is fact that the royalists have neither yet taken Providence nor the American ships: the other side believe that Lord Cornwallis has received a check at the Jersey's. Lee is certainly taken by the poltroonery of his own men, of whom he had eighteen to Colonel Harcourt's fourteen. He has written a short letter in which he himself says so, and adds, that he submits to his fate, only regretting that liberty will no longer enjoy a foot of earth.

The Habeas Corpus Bill, you see, has appeared, though nobody would believe it. Lord Rockingham and his ingenious band have contrived to make a more ridiculous figure by doing nothing, than they ever did by anything they attempted. They are sure of not being taken up during the suspension on the suspicion of a plot. You have seen in the papers, I suppose, that "John the painter" is a Scot, and that he dated the conflagration at Bristol from an

American merchant's house, and committed a burglary, which it is not even pretended to have been directed by the orders of the Congress.

The Landgrave of Hesse, on the strength of our subsidy, is gone to Rome, to make a solemn renunciation of the Protestant religion at the feet of the Pope; who ought to declare him vice-defender of the Faith against the heretics and quakers of Philadelphia.

Mr. Palgrave is in town, and so is a third inundation of snow, yet I have gone about these three weeks and had no return of my disorder. Give me as good an account of yourself.

1632. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

DEAR SIR: *Arlington Street, Feb.* 20, 1777.

YOU are always my oracle in any antique difficulties. I have bought at Mr. Ives's[1] sale (immensely dear) the shutters of the altar at Edmondsbury: Mr. Ives had them from Tom Martin,[2] who married Peter Leneve's widow; so you see no shutters can be better descended on the mother's side. Next to high birth, personal merit is something: in that respect my shutters are far from defective: on the contrary, the figures in the inside are so very good, as to amaze me who could paint them here in the reign of Henry VI.; they are worthy of the Bolognese school—but they have suffered in several places, though not considerably. Bowes is to repair them under oath of only filling up the cracks, and restoring the peelings off, but without repainting or varnishing.

The possession of these boards, invaluable to me, was essential. They authenticate the sagacity of my guesses, a talent in an antiquary coequal with prophecy in a saint. On the outside is an archbishop, unchristened by the late possessors, but evidently Archbishop Kempe, or the same person with the prelate in my 'Marriage of Henry VI.'—and you will allow from the collateral evidence that it must be Kempe, as I have so certainly discovered another person in my picture. The other outside is a cardinal, called by Mr. Ives, Bavington; but I believe Cardinal Beaufort, *for* the lion of England stands by him, which a bastardly prince of the blood was more likely

[1] John Ives the antiquary, author of 'Remarks upon the Garianonum of the Romans; the Site and Remains fixed and described.'—WRIGHT.

[2] Tom Martin, of Palgrave, the well-known antiquary, whose 'History of Thetford was published in 1779, by Gough.—WRIGHT.

to assume than a true one. His face is not very like, nor very unlike, the face in my picture, but this is shaven.—But now comes the great point. On the inside is Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, kneeling—not only as exactly resembling mine as possible, but with the same almost bald head, and the precisely same furred robe. An apostle-like personage stands behind him, holding a gold chalice, as his royal highness's offering, and, which is remarkable, the Duke's velvet cap of state, with his coronet of strawberry-leaves.

I used to say, to corroborate my hypothesis, that the skull of Duke Humphrey at St. Alban's was very like the form of head in my picture, which argument diverted the late Lord Holland extremely—but I trust now that nobody will dispute any longer my perfect acquaintance with *all Dukes of Gloucester*.—By the way, did I ever tell you that when I published my 'Historic Doubts on Richard III.,' my niece's marriage not being then acknowledged, George Selwyn said, he did not think *I* should have *doubted* about the Duke of Gloucester? On the inside of the other shutter is a man unknown: he is in a stable, as Joseph might be, but over him hangs a shield of arms, that are neither Joseph's nor Mary's. The colours are either black and white, or so changed as not to be distinguishable. * * * * I conclude the person who is in red and white was the donor of the altar-piece, or benefactor; and what I want of you is to discover him and his arms; and to tell me whether Duke Humphrey, Beaufort, Kempe, and Babington were connected with St. Edmondsbury, or whether this unknown person was not a retainer of Duke Humphrey, at least of the royal family.

At the same sale, I bought a curious pair, that I conclude came from Blickling, with Hobart impaling Boleyn, from which latter family the former enjoyed that seat. How does this third winter of the season agree with you? The wind to-day is sharper than a razor, and blows icicles into one's eyes. I was confined for seven weeks with the gout, yet am so well recovered as to have been abroad to-day, though it is as mild under the Pole.

Pray can you tell me the title of the book that Mr. Ives dedicated to me? I never saw it, for he was so odd (I cannot call it modest, lest I should seem not so myself) as never to send it to me, and I never could get it. Yours truly.

1633. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

February 27, 1777.

You see, dear Sir, that we thought on each other just at the same moment; but, as usual, you was thinking of obliging me, and I, of giving you trouble. You have fully satisfied me of the connexion between the Lancastrian Princes and St. Edmondsbury. Edmondson, I conclude, will be able to find out the proprietor of the arms, impaling Walrond.

I am well acquainted with Sir A[nthony] Weldon and the 'Aulicus Coquinanæ,' and will return them with Mr. Ives's tracts, which I intend to buy at the sale of his books. Tell me how I may convey them to you most safely. You say, "Till I show an inclination to borrow more of your MSS." I hope you do not think my appetite for that loan is in the least diminished. I should at all minutes, and ever, be glad to peruse them all—but I was not sure you wished to lend them to me, though you deny me nothing—and my own fear of their coming to any mischance made me very modest about asking for them—but now, whenever you can send me any of them with perfect security, I eagerly and impudently ask to see them: you cannot oblige me more, I assure you.

I am sorry Dr. E * * n is got into such a dirty scrape. There is scarce any decent medium observed at present between wasting fortunes and fabricating them—and both by any disreputable manner: for, as to saving money by prudent economy, the method is too slow in proportion to consumptions: even forgery, alas![1] seems to be the counterpart or restorative of the ruin by gaming. I hope at least that robbery on the highway will go out of fashion as too piddling a profession for gentlemen.

I enclose a card for your friends, but must advertise them that March is in every respect a wrong month for seeing Strawberry. It not only wants its leaves and beauty then, but most of the small pictures and curiosities, which are taken down and packed up in winter, are not restored to their places till the weather is fine and I am more there. Unless they are confined in time, your friends had much better wait till May—but, however, they will be very welcome to go when they please. I am more personally interested in hoping

[1] Alluding to Dr. Dodd, whose trial for forgery had taken place on the 22nd, at the Old Bailey.—Wright.

to see you there this summer—you must visit my new tower. Diminutive as it is, it adds much to the antique air of the whole in both fronts. You know I shall sympathise with your gout, and you are always master of your own hours.

1634. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Feb. 27, 1777.

I was very wise in never advertising retirement. I knew well how difficult it is to quit the world, and yet have done with it. The love of Fame has its colts-tooth as well as old ladies. Alas! my good friend, heroes, philosophers, statesmen, have their itchings left, though their all needs have been fully satisfied. Poor Mr. Garrick labours under this infirmity of age; he has complained of Mons. Le Texier for thinking of bringing over Caillaud the French actor in the Opera Comique, as a mortal prejudice to his reputation; and, no doubt, would be glad of an Act of Parliament that should prohibit there ever being a good actor again in any country or century. But this is not all, he has solicited King George to solicit him to read a play. The piece was quite new, 'Lethe,' which their Majesties have not seen above ten times every year for the last ten years. He added three new characters equally novel, as a Lady Featherby, because the Queen dislikes feathers. The piece was introduced by a prologue *en Fable;* a Blackbird grown grey-haired, as blackbirds are wont to do, had retired from the world, but was called out again by the Eagle. Mr. Hare asked Garrick, if his Majesty looked very like an Eagle? The audience was composed of King, Queen, Princess Royal, Duchess of Argyll, Lady Egremont, Lady Charlotte Finch; the Prince of Wales was not present; and all went off perfectly ill, with no exclamations of applause and two or three formal compliments at the end. Bayes is dying of chagrin, and swears he will read no more.

My second moral example is in higher life. That old ruinous fragment of Faction, Lord Temple, has had an aching gum too. Become by his separation from Lord Chatham, and by the death of his brother George, too insignificant and too impotent to overturn, awe or even alarm the Administration, he has been attempting to wriggle into a little favour by a mongrel mixture of treachery, spying and *informing*, below a gentleman, and even below any Lord, but one. Affecting to be shocked at the attempt on Bristol, he employed one

of his own incendiaries to resort to the prison where John the painter lies, and his worthy agent, by worming himself into that man's confidence, pretends to have learnt from him that the said John had received 300*l.* from Silas Deane, for the purpose of burning, not only Bristol, Portsmouth, and Plymouth, but the Bank of England, for stone and gold are wonderfully combustible. The natural philosophers in power believe that Dr. Franklin has invented a machine of the size of a tooth-pick case, and materials, that would reduce St. Paul's to a handful of ashes. I know a very pious seigneur that firmly believes in this revival of the nostrum of the old man of the mountain—though I do not think he would like this destructibility of gold, if he did believe in it.

The capture of the Hessians is confirmed with circumstances somewhat untoward, for they were not surprised, and yet all laid down their arms as if they liked lands in America, better than the wretched pittance they are to receive out of the Landgrave's dole.

It is now the fashion to cry up the manœuvre of General Washington in this action, who has beaten two English regiments, too, and obliged General Howe to contract his quarters—in short, the campaign has by no means been wound up to content.

There is a great breach in the house of Holdernesse. Dayrolle's daughter has eloped to *Leonidas* Glover's youngest son, who is a friend of Lord Carmarthen: Lady Carmarthen has harboured, and the Countess, her mother, has forbidden the daughter her court. This is my second letter. Mem. I have not had a line from you.

1635. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, March 5, 1777.

My last has already told you, I hope, that I am entirely recovered. You shall believe, if you please, that a moment of bootikins weakened *you;* but allow *me* to be certain that above three years of experience has demonstrated that they do not weaken *me;* and as to all reasonings of the Italian physicians, why, they are still more ignorant than ours. I shall not argue with them or you, for I have no convert-making zeal. I content myself with my own judgment and experience for my own use, and it is not reasonable to expect that others should see truth with my eyes. It has rarely happened to me to think with the majority, and I have so much respect for the plural number as not to dispute with them. There never were more against

me than in our present politics. I have kept my sentiments pretty much to myself, but nothing has made me change my opinion. At present, the aspect is not as if I had been totally in the wrong. The campaign in America has lost a great deal of its florid complexion, and General Washington is allowed by both sides not to be the worst general in the field. The Stocks are grown positive that we shall have a French war. *That* was so self-evident, that I should be ashamed of bragging I had always foreseen it. A child might foretell many of the consequences. I leave it to those who *would not* foresee to excuse themselves as they can.

The Gazettes will tell you as much as you are allowed to know or believe. If you do not understand them, you will not be singular. The time is coming, I doubt, when Truth will write a more legible hand. In one word, the retreat of the Americans seems to have been wise; you will find they will fight and have fought, and that, when we believed Philadelphia was gone, General Howe has been obliged to contract his quarters. I should think less than *unlimited submission*[1] would content us at present; and I leave you to judge whether France will be omitted in the negotiation, and whether she will enjoin the congress to be very tractable. I hope there will be a little more wisdom in making the peace than there was in making the war; but they who make the one, do not always consider that they may not be equally masters to make the other.

There is scarcely anything of private news. Two old persons that you remember are dead, Sir Thomas Robinson [*Long* Sir Thomas] and Lady Shadwell;[2] she lived to ninety-six. The Duke of Norfolk,[3] but two years younger, is recovered from a dangerous illness. Lady Chesterfield[4] has had a stroke of palsy, but may linger some time longer. In short, my dear Sir, you and I can only talk in common of a few Methusalems, cock and hen; for, as to the travelling boys that you get acquainted with *en passant*, I do not. I have done with the world, except parting with it in form; and chiefly pass my time with a few acquaintance or alone at Strawberry Hill, where I never want amusement. My old age is as agreeable as I desire it:

[1] Lord George Germain declared in the House of Commons, when Secretary of State, that he would be content with nothing under the unlimited submission of America.—WALPOLE.

[2] See vol. i. p. 84.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] Edward Howard, ninth Duke of Norfolk. He died on the 20th of September, at the great age of ninety-two.—WRIGHT.

[4] Melusina Schulembourg, Countess of Walsingham, niece of the Duchess of Kendal, and widow of the celebrated Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield. She died in September, 1778.—WALPOLE.

oppressed with no misfortunes, disappointments, or infirmities,—for I am determined to consider the gout as a remedy that only makes my liberty more welcome; with a fortune as ample as I wish either for pleasing myself or for doing some kindnesses; indifferent to pleasures that would be ridiculous, and encumbered with no glory or vanity that would impose restraint or reserve on me. I enjoy the remnant with cheerfulness, and think I shall lay it down with no more regret than what must attend parting with what is not disagreeable. I am exceedingly thankful for the happiness of my lot, and own it has been far greater than I should have dared to ask. Can I, then, but be content when it shall terminate? This is the thirty-seventh year of our correspondence: we are the Orestes and Pylades of letter-writers, yet I wish our meeting had left us less to boast! Adieu!

P.S. I must add a curious story, which I believe will surprise your Italian surgeons, as much as it has amazed the faculty here. A sailor, who has broken his leg, was advised to communicate his case to the Royal Society. The account he gave was, that, having fallen from the top of the mast and fractured his leg, he had dressed it with nothing but tar and oakum, and yet in three days was able to walk as well as before the accident. The story at first appeared quite incredible, as no such efficacious qualities were known in tar, and still less in oakum; nor was a poor sailor to be credited on his own bare assertion of so wonderful a cure. The Society very reasonably demanded a fuller relation, and, I suppose, the corroboration of evidence. Many doubted whether the leg had been really broken. That part of the story had been amply verified. Still it was difficult to believe that the man had made use of no other applications than tar and oakum; and how *they* should cure a broken leg in three days, even if they could cure it at all, was a matter of the utmost wonder. Several letters passed between the Society and the patient, who persevered in the most solemn asseverations of having used no other remedies, and it does appear beyond a doubt that the man speaks truth. It is a little uncharitable, but I fear there are surgeons who might not like this abbreviation of attendance and expense. But, on the other hand, you will be charmed with the plain honest simplicity of the sailor: in a postscript to his last letter he added these words. "I forgot to tell your honours that the leg was a wooden one." Was there ever more humour? What would one have given to have been present, and

seen the foolish faces of the wise assembly! I am an unworthy member of that learned body, and never attend their meetings, which I now regret; I should have been paid for many dull hours: but I never had patience for such solemn assemblies, and have neglected that of the Arts and Sciences, as well as the Royal. I shut myself entirely out of the Antiquarian Society and Parliament, the archiepiscopal seats of folly and knavery.

1636. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

March 13, 1777.

So you think I have always something to say because I live in London? If I have, I am sure novelty does not constitute my cargo. The present world seems composed of forgery and informers, and the peers dignify the latter list, and may perhaps the former: I am not ambitious of being their historian. One Dignam, a candidate for the borough of Hindon, and Parliament, had given information of a plot against the King's life, which he had invented, and it neither producing a place for him nor Lord Temple, he took to selling places to others, which all his merit could not obtain for himself—and so he is only in Newgate. This is a specimen of town news. It is better to be at York, than write Memoirs of Mrs. Grieve, Mrs. Rudd, Dr. Dodd, Mr. Dignam, and Lord Temple.

Hume's 'Life,' written by himself, is just published. It is a nothing, a brief account of his disappointments on his irreligious works making no noise at first, and his historic making some. He boasts that in the latter he dared to revive the cause of despotism—a great honour truly to a philosopher; and he speaks of your friend, Bishop Hurd, with a freedom, that I dare to say the whole Court will profess to his Lordship they think monstrous rudeness. My Lord H[ertford], whose piety could swallow Hume's infidelity, will be shocked now that he should have employed such a brute.

The 'Memoirs and Miscellaneous Works of Lord Chesterfield' are come out too. They are in two huge quartos, drawn up by Dr. Maty and his son, and compiled chiefly from pamphlets. I am got but a little way into them with small edification, yet I have found a new anecdote or two, that are curious, and there are some of his *bon-mots* that will be new to others. In the second volume are several of his French letters to a Madame de Monconseil, whom I know. She was married to a French officer, and when I was first recommended to

her above thirty years ago, her mother kept a gaming-house, and the daughter has ever since dealt in intrigues of all sorts, which latterly, you may be sure, have been chiefly political; and of both sorts I believe interest was generally the motive. Towards the end of the Duke of Choiseul's power, her house was the rendezvous of all his enemies. I have seen Madame de Mirepoix there with Marshal Richelieu, whom, till faction reunited them, she would never be in a room with (but at Court) as he killed her first husband. She married her nephew to Madame de Monconseil's daughter, and that made a quarrel between Madame de Mirepoix and the prime minister, and was the true cause of his fall; for the Princess de Beauvau, her sister-in-law and enemy, to hurt Madame de Mirepoix, drove the Duchess de Grammont into all the violence against Madame du Barri, and the Duke was so weak as to let those two women embroil him with the mistress. I was an eye-witness of those scenes, and at the Duke's three or four nights in a week, and heard all their indiscretions.

There are I see besides, a letter or two to Madame de Tençin, a most horrid woman, sister of the Cardinal. She had great parts and so little principle, that she was supposed to have murdered and robbed one of her lovers, a scrape out of which Lord Harrington, another of them, saved her. She had levées from eight in the morning till night, from the lowest Tools to the highest. Dalembert was her natural son, Madame Geoffrin her pupil, and Pontdevesle her nephew, who was supposed to have only adopted her novels, the 'Comte de Cominges,' and the 'Mémoires de Philippe Auguste.' This acquaintance with the personages, English and French, makes me eager about these memoirs, and as I love nothing so much now as writing notes in my books, this will furnish me with employment.

I am extremely of your opinion about the new old poems. Indeed you talk *en connoissance de cause :* who can dispute with the author of the 'Monody?' As I already have *your* 'Garden,' I am less interested about its publication. I almost grudge the swine your pearls; yet write the third and the fourth, and sometimes to me, for I must be encouraged, or I cannot write even newspapers. There is nothing pleases me so much as humbling myself to the level of my talents. Writing notes in my books (as it requires only truth and memory, and no parts) suits me exactly; and had I always known myself as well as I do now, I should never have soared out of my sphere, and my works would have been highly valued, as I

should have never had above one reader to each, the person who buys my books at my auction.[1] Don't tell me you have nothing to say: you see how easy it is to make a long letter; one might have written this in the Isle of Sky, but you are a poet and a tragic author, and will not condescend to write anything lest your letters should rise in judgment against you. It is a mercy to have no character to maintain. Your predecessor, Mr. Pope, laboured his Letters as much as the 'Essay on Man,' and as they were written to everybody, they do not look as if they had been written to anybody. However, as I expect to be indemnified for your silence, I will consent to send you three letters for one, provided you give me a satisfactory account hereafter of your having been better employed than in answering mine. I certainly shall do nothing better than writing to you, and therefore whenever I have anything worth telling you, you shall hear it; and I shall not consider whether it is worth posterity's knowing or not. Posterity must deserve my favour a little better than their ancestors now living, or I shall not care a straw for their suffrage.

1637. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, March 28, 1777.

I HAVE been here these six days alone, enjoying the bounty of March, which has laid aside its old dry winds and behaved with a warmth, a heat that June seldom condescends to bestow. I have had every door and window all day open for these three days, and in the garden the sun was even too hot. I wonder that in this pious age there is no fear of an earthquake, and that my Lord of London has not threatened us with one in his pastoral letter on Good Friday!

I left the town in a buzz about Lord Pigot's arrest, in which the Scots are said to have acted an ungentle part; nay, one of guile, if they could be suspected of any unfair dealings. We have fancied that this little isle could hold both the east and the west *in commendam*, and supply the places of Montezuma and Aurengzebe. I doubt France will soon present to both those cures of souls. Caius Manlius Washingtonius Americanus, the dictator, has got together a large army, larger than that our ally the Duke of Wirtemburg was

[1] Walpole enriched his books with notes—always to the point. The disposal of the Strawberry Hill library without a careful examination of Walpole's notes, for a public purpose, is much to be regretted.—CUNNINGHAM.

to have sold us, and General Howe who has nothing but salt provisions in our metropolis, New York, has not twenty thousand pounds' worth of pickles as he had at Boston; but I do not understand military matters, and therefore will say no more of them. Have you read Hume's 'Life,' and did you observe that he thought of retiring to France and changing his name, because his works had not got him a name? Lord Bute called himself Sir John Stuart[1] in Italy to shroud the beams of a title too gorgeous; but it is new to conceal a name that nobody had heard of. Have you got Lord Chesterfield? I have read his letters and like them, but Dr. Maty is no *Mason* at biography. You will be charmed with his 'Common Senses' and 'Fogs,' if you never read them, and with his 'Worlds,' which you have read. They are the best of his works. Mr. Jephson has sent me his 'Vitellia,' which Garrick rejected last year, with as much judgment as he acted all the wretched pieces that appeared at Drury Lane for so many years. It has beautiful poetry as 'Braganza' had, and more action and more opportunities for good actors, if there were any.

This is my second since my promise of three, of which I repent already, as I have no satisfaction in writing but to hear from you; but I can make all three as short as I please, for the spirit and the letter of a promise are two very different things, vide Sanchez, Escobar, Mansfield, and other casuists on Coronation oaths.

1638. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, April 3, 1777.

I HAVE nothing very new to tell you on public affairs, especially as I can know nothing more than you see in the papers. It is my opinion that the King's affairs are in a very bad position in America. I do not say that his armies may not gain advantages again; though I believe there has been as much design as cowardice in the behaviour of the provincials, who seem to have been apprised that protraction of the war would be more certainly advantageous to them than heroism. Washington, the dictator, has shown himself both a Fabius and a Camillus. His march through our lines is allowed to have been a prodigy of generalship. In one word, I look upon a great part of America as lost to this country! It is not less deplorable, that, between art and contention, such an inveteracy has been

[1] See p. 231 of this volume.—CUNNINGHAM.

sown between the two countries as will probably outlast even the war! Supposing this unnatural enmity should not soon involve us in other wars, which would be extraordinary indeed, what a difference, in a future war with France and Spain, to have the Colonies in the opposite scale, instead of being in ours! What politicians are those who have preferred the empty name of *sovereignty* to that of *alliance*, and forced subsidies to the golden ocean of commerce!

Alas! the trade of America is not all we shall lose! The ocean of commerce wafted us wealth at the return of regular tides: but we had acquired an empire too, in whose plains the beggars we sent out as labourers could reap sacks of gold in three or four harvests; and who with their sickles and reaping-hooks have robbed and cut the throats of those who sowed the grain. These rapacious foragers have fallen together by the ears; and our Indian affairs, I suppose, will soon be in as desperate a state as our American. Lord Pigot [Governor of Madras] has been treacherously and violently imprisoned, and the Company here has voted his restoration. I know nothing of the merits of the cause on either side: I dare to say both are very blameable. I look only to the consequences, which I do not doubt will precipitate the loss of our acquisitions there; the title to which I never admired, and the possession of which I always regarded as a transitory vision. If we could keep it, we should certainly plunder it, till the expense of maintaining would overbalance the returns; and, though it has rendered a little more than the holy city of Jerusalem, I look on such distant conquests as more destructive than beneficial; and, whether we are martyrs or banditti, whether we fight for the holy sepulchre or for lacks of rupees, I detest invasions of quiet kingdoms, both for their sakes and for our own; and it is happy for the former, that the latter are never permanently benefited.

Though I have been drawn away from your letter by the subject of it and by political reflections, I must not forget to thank you for your solicitude and advice about my health: but pray be assured that I am sufficiently attentive to it, and never stay long here in wet weather, which experience has told me is prejudicial. I am sorry for it, but I know London agrees with me better than the country. The latter suits my age and inclination; but my health is a more cogent reason, and governs me. I know my own constitution exactly, and have formed my way of life accordingly. No weather, nothing gives me cold; because, for these nine and thirty

years, I have hardened myself so, by braving all weathers and taking no precautions against cold, that the extremest and most sudden changes do not affect me in that respect. Yet damp, without giving me cold, affects my nerves; and, the moment I feel it, I go to town. I am certainly better since my last fit of gout than ever I was after one: in short, perfectly well; that is, well enough for my age. In one word, I am very weak, but have no complaint; and as my constitution, frame, and health require no exercise, nothing but fatigue affects me: and therefore you, and all who are so good as to interest themselves about me and give advice, must excuse me if I take none. I am preached to about taking no care against catching cold, and am told I shall one day or other be caught—possibly: but I must die of something; and why should not what has done to sixty, be right? My regimen and practice have been formed on experience and success. Perhaps a practice that has suited the weakest of frames, would kill a Hercules. God forbid I should recommend it; for I never saw another human being that would not have died of my darings, especially in the gout. Yet I have always found benefit; because my nature is so feverish, that everything cold, inwardly or outwardly, suits me. Cold air and water are my specifics, and I shall die when I am not master enough of myself to employ them; or rather, as I said this winter, on comparing the iron texture of my inside with the debility of my outside, "I believe I shall have nothing but my inside left!" *Therefore*, my dear Sir, my regard for you will last as long as there is an atom of me remaining.

1639. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, April 5, 1777.

Young folks may fancy what they will of such antiques as I am, having no original pleasures, or only scraps and ends; Lord Holland was always whining on the miseries of old age; now I can tell both the one and the other, that there are very cordial enjoyments, which only the old can have. I have just tasted two great raptures of the sort I mean,—but indeed they do not happen very often. The transports I allude to, are living to see the *private* works, sentiments, and anecdotes of one's own time come to light. The two last folios of Lord Chesterfield delighted me upon that score, but there is still a fresher work of the same kind, and by far one of the most curious and authentic that ever was published. It is a history of many

interesting parts of the latter end of Louis Quatorze, of the Regent, and of the late King of France, taken from an immense collection of state papers amassed by the two last Marechaux de Noailles, furnished by the family, and though of dates so recent, and though published at Paris, written with a freedom and impartiality that are stupendous. I will give you an instance that is striking: one of the Marechals congratulates Louis on the taking of Namur, and says it is a conquest that he alone could achieve. King William, says the author, took it with much more deserved applause two years afterwards. There are six duodecimos, pretty thick; the first relates chiefly to the persecution of the Protestants on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; is severe on the King, but unsatisfactory, because the Marshal being recalled, the author follows him and not the war; and this is almost the only kind of fault I find in the work, which ought to have been called Memoirs of the two marshals, instead of Memoirs of two reigns. But the invaluable part, and that pretty perfect, is the genuine and secret history of Spain on the establishment of Philip V. Nothing ever was more curious—you will even see the pains Louis XIV. took to persuade his grandson to give up Spain and content himself with Sardinia, and you cannot doubt it. The two last volumes are not less interesting to me, who have the very minute of time before my eyes. I remember how I trembled, as Lord Chesterfield did (for these Memoirs are the counterpart of his) just before the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and yet you will see that the Court of France was in as great a panic as we had reason to be. I remember saying often, that a little thing saved us as ruined us, and that if France had not as incapable ministers as we had, we must be undone. Perhaps, when more Memoirs of the Family of Noailles appear, semebody or other will make this reflection again.

The second Marshal had (luckily for posterity, though probably a little wearisome at the time) a rage of drawing up memorials; but he was a good and a prudent man; and the latter quality made his courage a little doubted, as the author fairly owns. I remember a *bon-mot* of his son, the present Marshal, on that topic. The old gentleman had like to have been drowned by going in a boat on the water; his son, the Duc d'Ayen, a great bon-motist, scolded the servants for not hindering his father, and said, "*ne scavez-vous pas que mon père craint l'eau comme le feu.*"

You cannot conceive the avidity with which I devoured these volumes; one cannot be more vigorous at eighteen, but alas! one

cannot go to Drury Lane and pick up two Noailles's every night! It is vexatious too, that as these papers will spread the taste of hoarding state papers (which the old Marshal had retained from the taste of memoir-writing that was rife in his youth), I shall not live to see those collections. We are indeed likely to have an immense collection ere long, but not quite so important. It seems by a note of Dr. Maty, that Lord Chesterfield,—who I thought had used him only as a butt to shoot wit at,—had kept up a correspondence with *Long* Sir Thomas Robinson [1] for fifty years. Well, Sir Thomas is dead too; and lest the public should sigh for his answers, as they did for Madame de Grignan's, he was so industrious as to keep copies of his; nay, he had preserved every letter he ever received; nay, and he had kept copies of all his answers to all them too; and he has left all (letters and answers) to the Roman people; that is, to an apothecary who married his natural daughter, with injunctions to publish all,—which will last me my life. Oh, but stay, the Primate of Ireland, Sir Thomas's brother, is not quite so indulgent as the House of Noailles, who have suffered a letter of a bishop, their uncle, who teases the Marshal for promotion, to be published. My Lord of Armagh is consulting lawyers whether he cannot stop the publication, and in truth it is an abominable thing that private letters of living persons should be printed.

I do not know a tittle of what has happened in Europe (or America) since Lord Chesterfield and Monsieur de Noailles died, but I shall go to town on Monday, recollect the living, and tell you what they have been doing; but then you must take care to answer this, which is *the third*, or if Lord Temple should find a plot in a Meal Tub or a Flower-Pot, I shall not be able to tell you till I am empowered to write a first letter.

8th, Lond.

The Bishop of London [Terrick] is dead, and Mlle. Khrome. I thought your friend Dr. Hurd would have succeeded them both. The message for the debts and civil list is to be delivered to-morrow. Somebody knocks, and I must finish.[2]

[1] *Long* Sir Thomas Robinson. There were two Sir Thomas Robinsons alive at the same time. The one, here mentioned, was called *Long* as a distinguishing characteristic. This gave occasion to a witticism of Lord Chesterfield, which I found among the Walpole MSS. Some one told Lord Chesterfield that *Long* Sir Thomas Robinson was very ill. "I am sorry to hear it."—"He is dying by *inches*."—"Then it will be some time before he dies," was the answer.—MITFORD.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, April 14, 1777.

SHAME upon me! I have, indeed, now three unanswered letters of yours, and such

1640. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

April 18, 1777.

I HAVE *seen* but not read one syllable of Marmontel's 'Yncas,' nor ever will. History is romance enough, without purposely per-

letters, too, as every one of them deserved three answers a-piece for the entertainment which they severally afforded; but if these nine letters were all of them written from this place and in my present monotonous situation, they would, I am convinced, not make one equal sufficient answer, or be deemed fair and full payment by any person conversant in the course of epistolary exchange; so I must content myself with resting in a state of insolvency, and continuing your poor debtor to the end of my Residentiarial days, if not to the end of my natural life. But pray (say you), Mr. Residentiary, what is a monotonous situation? Is it not a phrase similar to a spontaneous coat, which puzzled a wit at White's so much, that in order to get rid of it, he laid a bet that there was no such word as spontaneous in Johnson's Dictionary! No, Sir! I assure you there is the strictest propriety in the epithet, for my hours are all regulated by a certain tinkling monotonous machine called the Minster prayer bell, which even now (while I am writing) begins to move its clapper, and will hardly let me finish my sentence, with an adieu to you till I have obeyed its summons and have gone to my matins * * *

And now, Sir, my matins are finished and I resume my pen, but the singing boys have bawled so horridly out of tune that I have lost all the good temper I was possessed of after my breakfast when I first sat down to write to you. And this is every day the case, and as the post goes off every day at noon, every letter I attempt to write is liable to the same mischance, so that nothing *suivie*, nothing that your critics would call a composition can possibly fall from my pen. "Well," reply you, "but are my letters compositions?" No! but they are better than compositions, and therefore when a man cannot write such better things than compositions, he must either compose or not write at all, Q. E. D.

I saw lately in a Review, the only species of literary beings (and you will allow them to be of the true Drury Lane stamp) on which one can here be vigorous, an account of a work of Marmontel's, called, I think, 'Les Incas,' which seemed to be a sort of historical novel on the conquest of Peru. Perhaps it might give one some hint for a drama similar to that which you once recommended to me. Marmontel is no favourite writer of mine, but he has invention, and sometimes traits of character. Have you seen the work and is it worth sending for to town? I could get it perhaps in a fortnight, if the waggoner pleases.

O! for the muse of Lord Lyttelton or of Mrs. Montague, that I might finish the imperfect dialogue which David Hume has left us between himself and Charon; and O! for the Dedicatorial powers of Sir John Hawkins that I might dedicate it either to the King or my Lord Hertford!

A friend of mine here, who is an excellent scholar, has examined Pliny with the greatest accuracy concerning all he has left relative to encaustic painting, and gone much further than Count Caylus or any French scholar, I believe, could possibly do, on such a subject. In short, he has found out the precise colours and mode of operation which Protogenes used, and from the single specimen he has produced has made it very clear to me that the art is capable of being carried to absolute perfection, and is equally excellent for its simplicity, and promise of durability; and I have reason to think that as the tints employed are fixed and permanent, pictures might be copied in this way, by persons no better skilled in drawing than the workmen in mosaic at Rome, or the tapistry weavers at the Gobelins. And now, Sir, by the time this reaches you, the budget will be opened, the

verting it. I could not wade through a quarter of his 'Belisarius.' I hope the Peruvians will have better masters to teach them liberty than French *philosophes*, and not be obliged to go to Paris on their way to Thermopylæ. However, as you can strike fire from a flint, I am disposed to send you the book, and shall be delighted if you beget a Pandora on a cloud.

It is easy to me to believe your friend's discoveries in encaustic. Muntz went far enough to prove the facility, use, and durability, but not far enough to get the method adopted; not from any defect or difficulty in the practice, but from the stupidity and obstinacy and John-trot-plodding-in-the-same-wayness of the Professors. If you think, because it talks more of the arts, that the age is grown more sensible and docile, I shall not agree with you. In truth I have made up my mind in a superb contempt of everything present, not because I am old and prefer the days of my youth: I go much further back. Except yours, which can produce adamants that will resist time and live to be dug up in a brighter century, I am for totally discouraging genius. The soil in which it could shoot and flourish vigorously is worn out—at least in this island. It is a reprobated land in every sense, and if I were twenty years younger, I would seek a wiser country; for there is a joy in looking up to great men and admiring them; there is none to a generous mind in looking down on anybody, much less on all and without any of the pride of virtue. I trust one may, without vanity, despise a world that respects nothing but gold, whether to hoard or squander. The contempt of money is no more a virtue than to wash one's hands is one; but one does not willingly shake hands with a man that never washes his.

Lord Chesterfield's 'Characters' are published, and are not even prettily written, as might have been expected. They are not so much as terse and quaint, which would not indeed have made them better, but they are even vulgar and ill-expressed: one would think he did not know the personages well with whom he had been so conversant. This is not from prejudice that I speak, for my father's is tolerably impartial, and in some parts just, yet as it was preserved

increase of the Civil List moved for, and everything that can make the felicity of this nation as permanent as the most genuine encaustic painting secured to us and our posterity. Let me not, I beseech you, owe all my intelligence of these blessed events to a newspaper. But indulge me (*pro more*) with a speedy account from your own pen, to which I will give no other epithet than that it is to me a most charitable pen, and shall have my prayers for its preservation both at matins and vespers, good creature as it is. Amen.—W. Mason.

by his Lordship, so many years after the confutation was notorious, it shows old prejudice to tax him with having sacrificed everything to the purpose of making a great fortune. He was born to 2500*l.* a-year, left a nominal estate of 8000*l.*, and died 50,000*l.* in debt. Tom Windham was more ingenuous, even though in Opposition, and in the height of the clamour. Going to see Longleat, built by Sir John Thynne, steward to the Protector Somerset, and the man who showed the house (which by the way is a town in comparison) saying, "it is a large house, but we don't pretend that it rivals Houghton." Windham replied, "No; yet I believe Mr. Jenkins (my father's steward) has not built such an one." The character of the Queen [Caroline] is equally unjust: avarice was by no means her failing. Lord Hardwicke is as ridiculously exalted. More, Bacon, Clarendon, were nothing to that Mirror of Magistrates; you would think that Lord Chatham could have out-reasoned Lord Mansfield, as easily as his thunder shook that aspen leaf. I do not recommend to your friend to copy these portraits in encaustic.

There is another scurrilous poem by the author of the 'Diaboliad.' It is particularly hurled at the heads of the Hertfords. The writer is supposed to be a Captain Coombes, whose title to the office of Censor General, is having been guilty of forgery; and to be executioner, to having married a common woman, who was kept by Lord Beauchamp. Are not we an exemplary people?

The payment of the King's debts was gratefully accorded yesterday by those who had contributed to cause his necessities. Charles Fox made a great figure in behalf of Lord John's motion for a committee. The latter apologised for the secession of his friends, on their finding they could do no good. Wilkes made a panegyric on the real King of France for his tenderness to his brothers, unlike the gloomy tyrant—and then he paused—Louis XI. In the Lords, Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Grafton differed on one motion, and agreed on another. I know nothing of the Budget, but I am charmed with a new mode of government, which everybody else laughs at; I mean the decision of the Directors of the East India Company, by tossing up heads and tails, whether Lord Pigot should be a Prisoner or a Nabob. If every nation was to be ruled by this compendious and impartial method, the people would on every occasion have an equal chance for happiness from every measure; and I beg to know where it is not three to one against them by every other mode. I would be content to live under the most despotic

monarchy that could be devised, provided King Heads-and-Tails were the sovereign.

You wonder I say nothing on your second 'Garden.' No, you don't. It is not upon any of the topics of the week, and the silent few that read from taste, come seldom in my way, who live half the week stark alone at Strawberry, and the rest of it with folks whose reading is the last thing I desire to hear them talk of; yet they do talk of it, for it is the 'Morning Post.' Lord Nuneham indeed told me to-night that a Lord of his acquaintance had taken your 'Garden' for Gray's and did not like it. We were both very glad of both, and I am sure you agree with us. Adieu![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, 1777.

Though I have had the pleasure of receiving three letters from you, I have not been so long in your debt as you may imagine, for two of them travelled about the county as your letters usually do, and by being misdirected saw Wakefield, Rotherham, Aston, &c., before they reached me at York; where I have now been two months, and must stay another before I am released from presiding over the diurnal devotions of decayed tradesmen and card-playing old gentlewomen. I beg their pardon for not giving these latter the precedence in my period; they would pull my surplice over my head, and uncover my shame if they knew it. So much for apology—if it can be called by that name. Let me now thank you, which I do most cordially, for the great entertainment those letters have given me, because they treat precisely of those very topics which I cannot learn here, and which of all others I love to have news about. Continue them, I beseech you, for sweet Saint Charity. I assure you my situation here in point of literary matters is just as awkward as if I had lived in the twelfth century, when all the books in Oxford, as Mr. Warton says, were contained in a few chests in St. Mary's Church. 'Tis true, however, if I subscribe my half-crown a quarter to the bookseller, I can read all the Jemmy Jessamies that come out, and at the middle of a month can have the high treat of that Review which was published on the first day of it. But this is the utmost York affords me. Yet by writing to Stonhewer, I did get Tom Warton down by the coach in due time, but have yet only had time to get through his two preliminary Dissertations, and to own the truth, thought it more like wading than reading; but I intend to wade on, whenever opportunity offers. If I had really that Papistical supremacy over letters that I once pretended to have to Mr. Jerningham, I would prohibit everybody from studying antiquities except those very few that had from nature more wit than they knew what to do with. I think when you was young, you were one of this class, and therefore you would have escaped my prohibition.

I know not whether this be a compliment to you or not; however, I mean to say that your antiquarian studies have done you (and you only of all I know), more good than harm; they have left you with as much of your wits about you as any man ought to be trusted with, and I dare say (if you would own it) you find those wits more tractable and manageable now, than before you was an antiquarian. I doubt, when I have gone through the huge quarto now before me, I shall not judge thus favourably of what antiquities have done to its author. I am already much displeased at what he says about the works of Ossian. He does not seem by any means to believe them genuine, and yet either his rage for antiquity, or his fear of Macpherson, makes him pretend to think them so, and yet in so weakly a way does he say the little he does in their defence, that he will rather heighten the suspicion against them. By the way, I have been very petulant and pert in some of my notes on this subject to a few of

1641. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Barton Mills, April 28, 1777.

After an interval of three years, in which my nephew remained as much in his senses as he was *supposed* to be before his declared phrenzy, he was seized a fortnight ago with a fever which soon

Mr. Gray's letters, and expect not only to have Macpherson himself, but all the Macs in Scotland upon my back. I had an opportunity of sending by a private hand (only the other day) the greatest part of my fourth section to Mr. Stonhewer, from whom you may have a sight of it whenever you please. You will there read forty letters, and the twenty more which complete the Section are now in the press, and I shall send them to him as they come from it. Two sheets more will go by this post. I am in no haste about publication, and for the same reason that you withhold your last volume of Anecdotes from the world. I am certain my notes, &c. will create me many enemies; and yet for my life I cannot help writing what I think the truth. Pray is the study of antiquities as useful towards checking a redundancy of truth as of wit? If, so, I think that I, too, must commence antiquarian.

They tell me that my name has been mentioned in the House of Commons about Literary Property, and that it was said, "I did not think it worth my while now to print the work I had in hand." I certainly never said this; I believe I might say that it would be well for me to wait and see whether anything would be done to secure one's property. The truth is, as you know, that I wish to make the publication lucrative, and for what I think a good purpose. Now, as it was difficult to do this before the Lords' decision, it is ten times more difficult to do it now; for what way have the booksellers now left to make themselves atonement for their loss of copyright, but the easy and effectual way of pirating saleable books? I verily believe they did this before the decision, and therefore I am sure they will do it now. One way that I thought of preventing this was by means of the Head [of Gray] you saw, which I thought they could not so easily pirate, and whether I use this or no, I mean to write my name in every copy, for which I have the respectable authorities of Churchill and Tristram Shandy. It does not appear to me that the case of authors, —*i. e.* of those few writers who like me have published by means of a bookseller, and have yet reserved their right of copy in themselves, has ever yet been considered in either of the debates at present. I have lost all right and title in all my own things, merely because my bookseller neglected to enter them in Stationers' Hall. But enough, more than enough, on so dull a subject.

I saw, near three weeks ago, the advertisement of a 'Familiar Epistle to the Author of the Heroic Epistle and Postscript;' if it had been good for anything I imagine you would have mentioned it, as you know I liked those publications. Is not their author yet found out?

I will say nothing of my meditated visit to you and a very few other friends in town and its environs till I hear from my curate, Mr. Alderson, who is now at Sion Hill, and who will soon give an account not only of his lordship's present state of health, but his intended motions. If either a journey to Bath or Yorkshire leaves me the Middlesex coast clear, I shall seize on that moment to visit you; for with this view I keep myself quite disengaged after I am free from my present confinement, which ends the 11th of next month, till which time I beg you to remember that I am at York and nowhere but at York. Believe me to be, with the most perfect respect, dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,
W. Mason.

brought out the colour of his blood. In two days he was furious. The low wretches by whom in his *sensible* hours he has always been surrounded, concealed the symptoms till they were terrifying. I received no notice till the sixth day, and then—by the stage-coach! I set out directly for the hovel where he is—a *pasnidge*-house, as the reverend proprietor[1] called it to me, on the edge of the fens, which my Lord hires, and is his usual residence. The single chamber without a bed is a parlour seven feet high, directly under my Lord's bedchamber, without shutters, and so smoky that there is no sitting in it unless the door is open. I am forced to lie here, five miles off, in an inn—a palace to *his* dwelling. The morning after my arrival, a physician I had sent for from Norwich, forty miles from hence, coming down to tell me how he had found my Lord, we were alarmed with a scream and a bustle. The doctor had ordered the window to be opened to let out the smoke, and, the moment he had quitted his patient, my Lord attempted to fling himself out of the window, but was prevented by his keeper and servants, who flung him on the bed You will scarcely believe that, on my arrival, his mistress, his steward, and a neighbouring parson of the confederacy, on my declaring I should remove him directly to London for proper assistance, cried out, that I should kill him if I conveyed him from that Paradise in which was all his delight, and where he has so long swallowed every apple that every serpent has offered to him. The very day before he had asked where he was.

At the desire of the Norwich physician, I sent for Dr. Jebb from London. Before he came, the fever was gone, and an interval of sense was returned. Yet, as before, he would only speak in a whisper, and could not be persuaded to show his tongue to Dr. Jebb, though he made rational answers. Dr. Jebb pronounced, that he had neither fever nor understanding. He has had a slight return of the former, and no delirium. Yet both his physicians, the apothecary, and even his mistress, think his disorder will still last some weeks. Perhaps it may not; nor is it the worst consideration that he will have these relapses: as this arrived in very cold weather, and from no apparent cause, the madness is evidently constitutional,

[1] One Ball, Minister of Eriswell, a jockey-parson. He having taken his doctor's degree in an interval of his correspondence with Mr. Walpole on Lord Orford's transactions about the parsonage-house, and Mr. Walpole directing his letter to him, ignorant of his titular advancement, "To Mr. Ball," the man in his answer was so absurd as to add a postscript in these words, "Dr. Ball, if you please, the next time you favour me."—WALPOLE.

and leaves both himself and his family with all their apprehensions. Mine are, that as both now and formerly he has betrayed mischievous designs, he will after some lucid interval destroy himself; and I have seen that the crew about him will not call in help till perhaps too late. They had not even sent for a physician; because, as they told me, my Lord (a lunatic) has no opinion of physicians. Judge of my distress! My brother and I have too much tenderness and delicacy to take out the statute of lunacy. All my care and attention to him, his mistress, and fortune, in his former illness, have not made the smallest impression. I have not even seen him these three years, though he declared on his recovery that he approved all I had done; and I must say that I meant to set an example of tenderness which, I believe, was never seen before in a parallel case. I cannot resent it from him; for his misfortune acquits him of everything. I had greatly improved his fortune, and should have effected much more, had he not instantly taken everything out of my hands.

This treatment, and many such reasons, had determined me never more to meddle with his affairs: indeed, the fatigue, joined to my apprehension, had half killed me. I had done everything at my own risk, and some things at my own cost. Thus, without the sanction of law, which I will not claim for my Lord's sake, I could not undertake his affairs again. I now declared I would take on me the care of his person and health, but never of his fortune—what will become of that, I know not! My own peace, at the end of my life, and broken as I am, must weigh something. I have, from the instant my Lord came of age, laboured to serve him—in vain. I have struggled hard to rescue and restore my family; a proud view, perhaps, yet as reasonable as most we have! Vision for vision. That insubstantial and transitory one, called Philosophy, that is, indifference, is, I suppose, the best. What are distant views in this world? To be realised when we are past knowing it. How idle are hopes about futurity, whether about our family or our country; and how little different in duration and extent, when compared with the succession of ages! If we hope our name and race, or if, on a grander scale, we wish the constitution of our country may last, are not those lofty views confined to two or three hundred years, which are but a moment in the revolution of endless centuries? The moment we step beyond the diminutive sphere of our familiar ideas, all is boundless and lost in immensity!—I descend to earth, to me and my little concerns.

I shall stay here to see the physician from Norwich to-morrow.

If he pronounces, as I expect, that my Lord is recovered, I shall take my leave, and resign him to the rudder of his own poor brain. I pity him, but it must be so. My character and Sir Edward's are at stake, and to preserve them we must obey the law literally. The last time, the moment the physicians pronounced him sane, we submitted and threw open his doors; though neither of us were of that opinion. I attended him to Houghton, and saw nothing but evidence of distraction. The gentlemen of the country came to congratulate him on his recovery; yet, for more than six weeks, he would do nothing but speak in the lowest voice, and would whisper to them at the length of the table, when the person next to him could not distinguish what he said. Every evening, precisely at the same hour, sitting round a table, he would join his forehead to his mistress's (who is forty, red-faced, and with black teeth, and with whom he has lived these twenty years), and there they would sit for a quarter of an hour, like two parroquets, without speaking. Every night, from seven to nine, he regularly, for the whole fortnight, made his secretary of militia, an old drunken, broken tradesman, read 'Statius' to the whole company, though the man could not hiccup the right quantity of the syllables. Imagine what I suffered! One morning I asked the company, before my Lord was up, how they found him? They answered, just as he had always been. Then, thought I, he has always been distracted.

Forgive my tiring you with these details! They have rushed into my memory again, and I cannot help venting them. I must expel them once more; though every sudden knock at my door at an unusual hour will terrify me, as it did for thirteen months three years ago. I have gone the round of all my thoughts, and can rest on no plan. Were families to have more power, it would be abused; and, as the law has fixed the criterion of sense, no private man for the best purposes must or can control it. I have done all I can; which is, to warn my Lord's dependants of the danger of concealing the first symptoms of his infirmity; and have endeavoured to alarm them, for their own sakes, with the risk of his not observing rigid temperance. Their interest in his health must combat their interest in flattering him. Adieu!

Arlington Street, May 2.

The Norwich physician said he found my Lord so much better, that I left him two days ago; though his mistress desired I would leave the keeper, at least for a month.

1642. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, May 2, 1777.

I ASK Mr. Fraser to send you the 'Incas;' I wish they may produce a thousand fold.

You must not expect news nor anything from me. I have been again involved in a sea of troubles: my nephew Lord Orford is relapsed, and I have passed the last ten days between the inn at Barton Mills, and the hovel where he is five miles thence. He is so far come to himself, that when he will speak, which is only in a whisper, his answers are rational. I will not tire you with the variety of my distresses, which are manifold; doctors, lawyers, stewards, rogues and relations, take up my whole time. I stole one day to walk through and dine with old Cole; I sighed to take the vows at the former. I think I could pass my last days there with great comfort. King's Chapel is more beautiful than Strawberry Hill. A bookish monk is a happy being; he is neither disposed to laugh, nor to feel, and scarce knows that the other two divisions are fools and villains. Adieu![1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

York, May 12, 1777.

I HAD heard of the melancholy account of your nephew's relapse only a day or two before I received your last favour, dated on the second, with the Incas, which I am obliged to you for, and will take care to return safely at some convenient opportunity. But as I received them only yesterday, cannot look into them till I get to Aston, where I hope to be next Saturday, after taking a tour eastward to look after some *improved* farms of mine which grow no corn, and on which my tenants break, and which keep exact pace with all other improvements in this improving age of ours. Your journey to Barton Mills, melancholy as it must have been, and which I sincerely condole with you for the cause of, could hardly be more comfortless than mine which I am about to take; but *parlons d'autres choses.* I have found out an empty gothic shrine in a conspicuous part of the Minster, which, on measurement, will exactly fit William de Hatfield, in which I mean to place him (the Dean willing) at my next Residence. But I must do it at my own expense, I suspect; for though we have received five marks a year ever since the Reformation for not praying for the said William's soul, I do not think we shall be grateful enough to his alabaster body to place him in the said shrine, by expense of Chapter. However, I think I can achieve this work for three or four guineas, and if you will go halves with me, and write an inscription in right good classical-gotho Latin, you shall be heartily welcome. I think we cannot get or secure fame for our joint love of dead princes at a cheaper rate than by this restoration of the said Prince William. You must send me also an exact blazon of his arms, which my encaustic friend, who goes on very prosperously, has promised to encausticate gratis.

I am so over head and ears in epistolary debts that I must apply to my correspondents to pay them, and as I can safely say they brought me into this debt they cannot in conscience refuse the grant. You stand highest creditor in this letter-list,

1643. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, May 14, 1777.

YOUR last has given me both pain and pleasure. I know the gout too well not to suffer for you; though when it begins but late in life

and therefore my first application is to you. We expect and demand, therefore, that you take this short and dull scrawl for full payment of all the long and most entertaining letters we have received from you during our Precentorial Residence, and we promise to be more economical when we are found at Aston near Rotherham, where please to remember we are forthwith going, and so we heartily bid you

Farewell.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, May 26, 1777.

I found your obliging letter of the 16th when I returned hither out of the East-Riding, inclosed in the supplement to David Hume's Life, which came safe and speedily by the Leeds coach; but how you came to find out that mode of conveyance puzzles me; 'tis, however, a very good one, and drops any parcel at my door most conveniently, and therefore occasionally it may be a safer conveyance than the post. This same supplement, I suspect, is written by Murray, a Scotch Bookseller[1] with whom I have a Chancery suit at present on account of his pirating Gray's poems. About a fortnight ago he sent me a printed letter which he said (in a MS. letter which accompanied it), that he should publish on the 21st instant, but sent me it before, "that he might not treat me with ill manners." I suppose, therefore, the letter is now published, and I hope you have either read it, or will read it immediately. I have nothing to say to it, but that I have got by it what Job wished for, when he said, "Oh, that my adversary had written a book, surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me," for the abuse is so gross and illiberal, that I think it will tend greatly to give a right issue to the cause, and lead to the end for which I first instituted it, which you know was to procure an act in favour of authors, and prevent the piracy of booksellers. You will say, I know, that in times like those, when there is no author fit to be read that cares whether his works be pirated or no, it is little worth while to aim at such a thing, but perhaps it may benefit posterity—and on that, perhaps, I mean to proceed.

I have waded through almost a volume of the Incas, but it was pain and grief to me. Your French philosophes think it incumbent upon them to turn preachers themselves after they think they have demolished preaching. But they turn out the dullest *proneurs* in the world, insomuch that I should not wonder if a fine French Belle Esprit laid down her Diderot or her Marmontel, and took up old Père Bourdaloue merely *pour sa desennuier*. I am sure I can read my friend Jeremy Taylor with great contentation after the most eloquent of them.

You must not expect the great honour of re-enshrining (not the bones) but the Alabaster figure of William of Hatfield unless you will share it with me and join your name to mine on the occasion. But as nothing can be done in this matter till my next Residence, I hope to talk the thing over with you in London before that time. I hear our Archbishop has preached a fine Tory-rory sermon about propagating the Gospel, and seems inclined rather to propagate popery than presbyterianism; but I cannot get a sight of it, though I writ a month ago to Montagu to send it to me. This is unlucky, because as I am catechising my parish in order to prepare them for his Grace's confirmation, I ought to learn the proper way of expounding to them what is

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[1] Grandfather of (my friend) the present John Murray of Albemarle Street.—CUNNINGHAM.

it is never very violent, and certainly is very wholesome discipline. It is ten times worse to have ceremony and princes to struggle with at

meant by that Spiritual Grace which his Archiepiscopal palm is to convey to them. I suppose Burke's Pamphlet is made out of the paper which he drew up in the beginning of last winter for the use of his friends in the minority, and which they had not the courage to make use of. I had a sight of it, and thought it in many parts excellently written. I have no chance of seeing it till Parliament breaks up and Mr. Montagu returns into my neighbourhood.

I am anxious to have better accounts of Lord Orford for your sake, but would not wish you till then to pain yourself on so melancholy a subject. Believe that I interest myself most cordially in your concerns, and that I am, dear Sir, most truly yours,

W. Mason.

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, June 21, 1777.

I found your favour of the 10th with the 'Gazettes Litteraires (for both which many thanks) at Sheffield on the 18th inst., after I had taken my leave of my diocesan at his visitation, who was then setting out for Wentworth Castle on the invitation of its noble owner. Except from him and the Duke of Newcastle, I do not find he has received any civility hitherto on his progress; I indeed, the day before, treated him with a stinking turbot at Aston; but I and my stinking turbot are nothing. The papers will tell you how he puffed his predecessor, Robin Goodfellow, in his charge, and except this, which gave great offence to everybody who knew Robin's real character—that is to say, the whole body of the clergy who heard him, save one unprovided-for chaplain, who wept bitterly; except this, I say, all other matters went off quietly and dully enough in conscience. Though naturally very ungracious in his manner, dry, reserved, and absent, he put on his most benign aspect to your humble servant, and invited both me and my portmanteau to Bishopthorpe, which I returned with two bows, one for my portmanteau and another for myself. I feel no little comfort in finding His Grace now northward of me, for almost all my time the fortnight before was taken up in parochial preparations, such as making out terriers, catechising children, writing them out confirmation tickets, &c. &c., preaching on the subject, &c. &c., all which you have no conception of, and would think it, if you had, my curate's business. Yet I had my reasons for taking it upon myself as much as possible on the present occasion; nevertheless, I have done something else: "Are you avised of that?" as Mrs. Quickly says. No; but I trust you will ere long. But the conveyance, though safe, is so uncertain in point of time—witness, your 'Gazettes Litteraires,' (which ought to have been dropt at my door five days before I found them ten miles off at Sheffield) that I shall find another method of giving you a sight of the drawings to which I allude, therefore you must wait with patience till they arrive. I must tell you one speech which I made to His Grace, as I have no speeches of other folks to send you. He praised my house, and said it must have cost me a good deal of money. I said it did, and perhaps I was imprudent to lay out so much, but it gave me consolation to think I had, by doing so, made a pretty adequate return to Lord H[oldernesse] for his patronage, especially as the living was retained in the family; and as to the situation, I thought it so pleasant, that a man might very well preserve his independency in it, the only thing which I thought worth preserving. His Grace was silent, but whether his silence gave consent to the opinion I pretend not to determine.

I will add no more till you receive my drawings, which as they are done in a pretty free way, will, I hope, please you well enough to excuse my writing you a longer letter. I do not expect you to put them up in the Beauclerk Tower, which, by the way, I long much to see, but I find no possibility of coming southward this year. Believe me, dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

W. Mason

such a moment; and I tremble lest your efforts against an enemy that will not bear an instant of contradiction, should have redoubled your torment. Oh! death itself does not regard princes less than the gout does. Then, on the other hand, I am charmed with the Duke's condescension;[1] and the more, as he will have witnessed your disability. I am sure, in some ministers, he might with reason have suspected your confinement was political.

You do not owe to me, I assure you, the Duchess's graciousness. I did not even imagine they would pass through Florence. She has not at all forgotten that she was not royally born, and her good-nature and familiarity are not expelled by dignity. I am sure you found her as easy and natural, as if she had not married even Lord Waldegrave. When she left England, her beauty had lost no more than her good qualities. I am glad your Court have behaved as they ought. I am glad the English see there is no nation so contemptibly servile as our own. Europe, that has hated our *fierté*, is reaping revenge fast. Our Western sun is setting, and dark clouds hang over our East. France and Spain have spoken pretty intelligibly. The former offered us for themselves, and for the latter, a naval disarmament. We jumped at it; and France coldly answered, that Spain would not come into it. So a war is sure, whenever they think us enough undone to be totally ruined. I believe a younger minister than Monsieur de Maurepas would think so at present.

I rejoice that you have got your nephew again, and Lady Lucy, and that she is so much better than you expected. I trust Lord Orford's agreement with his grandfather's creditors, which he had just signed, is good. The law will probably think so. In my private opinion, he has been mad these twenty years and more. On his coming of age, I obtained a fortune of one hundred and fifty-two thousand pounds for him: he would not look at her.[2] Had I remained charged with his affairs six months longer on his last illness, he would have been five thousand a-year richer than the day he fell ill. My reward was, not to see him for three years. But I see I cannot help talking of this. I had twice expunged all thoughts of Houghton and my family from my memory. They are forced on me again when I can do no good. Well, it was not my plan of old age to pass my time with princes or madmen! Mine has been a chequered life of very various scenes! But it has taught

[1] The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were then at Florence.—Walpole.
[2] Miss Nicoll. See Vol. ii. p. 246, 380.—Cunningham.

me some temper, which I was not born with; and the best of all lessons, to do right, because others do wrong. It is not enough to be indignant, if one does not mend one's self. I had much to mend, and corrections made in age have very little grace. One seldom conquers one's passions till time has delivered them up bound hand and foot. Therefore I have very little esteem for my own philosophy. It is at most but solicitude to make a decent exit, and applying to one's character what Pope makes an expiring beauty say of her face—

"One would not sure be frightful when one's dead!"

Alas! we are ridiculous animals. Folly and gravity equally hunt shadows. The deepest politician toils but for a momentary rattle. There is nothing worth wishing for but the smile of conscious innocence; and that consciousness would make the smile of age more beautiful than even the lovely infant's simplicity. I possess no such jewel: but one may admire a diamond, though one cannot obtain it. You see how my nephew throws my mind into a moral train, which is naturally more gay; and my wisdom commonly prefers accepting the vision life as a something, to analysing it. But one is the creature of the hour, and this happens to be a serious one. Adieu!

May 15.

I have received your long letter, and thank you for it most particularly; especially for one part, which you may guess by my not mentioning. But you were so pleased with the Duchess's manner, that you forgot her beauty; which I thought would strike you. The little Princess [Sophia Matilda] is a dear soul, and I do not intend to be inconstant and prefer her brother;[1] nor do I think the Duke will.

We have no news. France has imprisoned the crew of a privateer that took one of our pacquet-boats, and carried it into Dunkirk. She is determined to draw us on farther on the hook, and we dare not seem to suspect that hook. I believe America gone past hope, unless we can recover it with half the number that was not sufficient last year. Adieu! I shall be impatient to hear you are recovered. Your new prince of Nassau[2] is perfectly ridiculous—a real peer of

[1] Prince William Frederick of Gloucester, born at the Theodole Palace, in the City of Rome, January 15th, 1776. On the death of his father, in 1805, he became Duke of Gloucester; and in 1816, married the Princess Mary, fourth daughter of George III.—WRIGHT.

[1] Earl Cowper had obtained a titular principality from the Emperor, imagining

England to tumble down to a tinsel titularity! Indeed, an English coronet will not be quite so weighty as it was!

1644. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Arlington Street, May 22, 1777.

It is not owing to forgetfulness, negligence, or idleness—to none of which I am subject, that you have not heard from me since I saw you, dear Sir, but to my miserable occupation with my poor nephew [Lord Orford], who engrosses my whole attention, and will, I doubt, destroy my health, if he does not recover his. I have got him within fourteen miles of town with difficulty. He is rather worse than better, may recover in an instant, as he did last time, or remain in his present sullenness. I am far from expecting he should ever be perfectly in his senses; which, in my opinion, he scarce ever was. His intervals expose him to the worst people; his relapses overwhelm me.

I have put together some trifles I promised you, and will beg Mr. Lort to be the bearer when he goes to Cambridge, if I know of it. At present I have time for nothing I like. My age and inclination call for retirement: I envied your happy hermitage, and leisure to follow your inclination. I have always *lived post*, and shall not die before I can bait—yet it is not my wish to be unemployed, could I but choose my occupations. I wish I could think of the pictures you mention, or had time to see Dr. Glynn and the master of Emmanuel. I doat on Cambridge, and could like to be often there. The beauty of King's College Chapel, now it is restored, penetrated me with a visionary longing to be a monk in it; though my life has been passed in turbulent scenes, in pleasures—or rather pastimes, and in much fashionable dissipation; still books, antiquity, and *virtù* kept hold of a corner of my heart, and since necessity has forced me of late years to be a man of business, my disposition tends to be a recluse for what remains—but it will not be my lot: and though there is some excuse for the young doing what they like, I doubt an old man should do nothing but what he ought, and I hope doing one's duty is the best preparation for death. Sitting with one's arms folded to think about it, is a very lazy way of preparing

that he should take place of English Dukes; but finding his mistake, and that it would give him no precedence at all here, he dropped the title of Prince.—Walpole.

for it. If Charles V. had resolved to make some amends for his abominable ambition by doing good, his duty as a King, there would have been infinitely more merit than going to doze in a convent. One may avoid active guilt in a sequestered life; but the virtue of it is merely negative, though innocence is beautiful.

I approve much of your corrections on Sir John Hawkins, and send them to the Magazine. I want the exact blazon of William of Hatfield his arms, — I mean the Prince buried at York. Mr. Mason and I are going to restore his monument, and I have not time to look for them: I know you will be so good as to assist

Yours most sincerely.

1645. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 10, 1777.

I DIRECT this to Ampthill, concluding from your unwillingness to leave it, Madam, that your stay at Warwick Castle will be short. You must be charmed with it; I think awed; at least, my Gothic superstition sees every tower haunted with Beauchamps, and I could not sleep there without dreaming of Queen Elizabeth in all her pomps and pageantries. Then the chapel in the Church! I beg the possessor's pardon, but I set very little store by Sir Fulke Greville. Oh! but in the Castle is a portrait of my hero, Lord Brook of the Civil War; and another of Lady Catherine Grey and her son, and of Lady Sandwich, who was no great hero of mine, no more than Lord Rochester and his monkey. Did you go to Guy's Cliff, and see how Lady Mary Greathead has painted it straw-colour, and stuck cockle-shells in its hair? There was a wise, Mr. Wise too, who lived at the Priory, who was very angry with me for asking if he had *planted* much, not knowing that he was the son of London and Wise the gardeners. Does not Miss Vernon[1] think it would have been more historic to have drawn her accompanying Earl Guy when he slew the dun cow, than St. George killing the dragon, which is not a quarter so true?

Your Ladyship's panegyric on the fine weather, if you will allow me to pun, came a day after the *fair*. June has relapsed into winter, if not to its usual rains. I found every soul in London

[1] The subject of Sir Joshua Reynolds's picture, before referred to [p. 397].— R. VERNON SMITH.

sitting by the fire, and talking over fifteen matches, and as many promotions. Mrs. Howe was the only person that wanted no extraneous heat. Two nights ago, she said, if Lord North had *promised* the Treasury to Lord Westcote, he certainly would not have it. Entered Mr. Keene. She asked him if it was the way of the Administration to affront those they employed! He was mute. You may think what you please, Sir, continued she, but I tell you, this is irreconcilable. Governor Tryon has burnt a magazine, but had great difficulty to retreat without losing all his men. Washington, they say, has laid the whole country waste. I am an old piece of wisdom, and you must bear with me. I doubt your Ladyship's dislike of quitting Ampthill proceeds a little from your aversion to appearing in public; but do you know you must surmount this, nay entirely. Will you like, when your daughters are to go about, to trust them to chaperons? The longer you are a recluse, the more uneasy it will be to break through a habit. You feel Lady Georgiana's want of you, and therefore must be educating yourself to produce Lady Anne. There is no pleasure in being anybody's friend, if one is not to tell them disagreeable truths; nor any comfort in growing old, if one may not be cross and preach. Our two resources, both charmingly ill-natured, are to foretell, and to blame. I make use of the first privilege, for fear of not living to enjoy the second. I have a little revenge in it too, for you *will* commend me, though I have no merit but having lived till I am fit for nothing but doing right.

The kingdom of France does not dine with me till *next* Saturday: it will ruin me, but I try to make friends amongst them, that they may not burn poor Strawberry when they invade us. In the mean time, I am a great prince. As regent to my nephew, I issued my writ to his falconer this morning, to deliver his thanks to—Thornton, Esq., during the interregnum. I have declined the superintendence of the finances, and have only taken charge of the *menus plaisirs*. Alas! I try to smile, but my gaiety is forced. I have no time to do anything I like, and must now go and write to Charles Boone about a gentleman that is to reside with and have the care of my nephew, who is calm and does not alarm me, but they say the more likely to continue as he is.

1646. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 15, 1777.

I RETURN your ladyship the General's letter, and you may be assured will never name it. The applying to him, I am satisfied, was a better method than what I suggested; and I should hope, though he does not say so, that he will take some way of apprising his friends, as he must be sensible that it will be a kind office to all concerned for the young lady; if, as I should think by Lady Louisa's account they are, they should not yet be aware that the affair is not at an end.

I am glad, Madam, you was contented with your Progress, and saw so much. Kenilworth is very awful; yet what want of taste in the choice of the situation! The chimney-piece in the gate-house I perfectly remember; it has the Earl of Leicester's crest and devices, and I have often begged Lord Hyde to take care of it. It has too much of the degenerate Gothic, or I should have tried to purchase it, as the possessor loves money a little better than a chimney-piece he neglects. Althorp is a great favourite of mine, from the number of portraits, its old simplicity, and being so connected with our story. I gave Miss Loyd several corrections to the catalogue of pictures, for they had mistaken several.

Lord Warwick, I think, may forgive me for condemning a modern steeple that only lives near him, when I have such reverence for his own Castle.

My French dinner went off tolerably well, except that five or six of the invited disappointed me, and the table was not full. The Abbé Raynal not only looked at nothing himself, but kept talking to the ambassador the whole time, and would not let him see anything neither. There never was such an impertinent and tiresome old gossip. He said to one of the Frenchmen, we ought to come abroad to make us love our own country. This was before Mr. Churchill, who replied very properly, "Yes, we had some Esquimaux here lately, and they liked nothing because they could get no train-oil for breakfast." Madame de Jarnac had a *migraine*, and Monsieur chose to keep her company.

I am glad you have heard of Mr. Fitzpatrick. You know there is another war in that part of the world: the Spaniards have taken an island on the coast of Brazil: I do not believe we shall dare to frown.

My Hexagon Closet will be finished in a fortnight, and then I shall be at liberty to pay my duty at Ampthill. The Churchills tell me the town says Lady Elizabeth Conway is to be married to Sir Matthew Fetherstone.

Have you got through Dr. Robertson, Madam? I am not enchanted. There is a great affectation of philosophising without much success. But there is one character that charms me, besides Las Casas, at whom the good doctor rather sneers; it is that of Pedro di Gasca, who was disinterested enough to make ten parliaments blush. Do but imagine the satisfaction with which he must have retired with his poverty, after the great things he had done, when every other of his countrymen were cutting the throats of Americans for gold! He did not want to be treasurer of the navy, as well as general and pacificator. I am delighted too with the ingratitude of the Spanish monarchs to all their heroic assassins. How fortunate the Otaheitans, to have no gold mines in their country!

1647. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, June 18, 1777.

The papers told you that Lord Chatham has again made his appearance.[1] In his place, I think I should not have done so. I should prefer being forgotten, to putting the world in mind of me without effect. He should sleep on his laurels, and leave posterity to make the comparison between him and his successors; who certainly are not prolific of trophies. Lord Cornwallis has gained a puny advantage, and Governor Tryon has burnt a magazine, which is thought a great blow to the provincials; but the Howes are not in fashion. Lord Percy[2] is come home disgusted by the

[1] On the 30th of May, the Earl of Chatham, though in a state of great weakness, had gone down to the House of Lords, and made a motion for the cessation of hostilities with America. It was rejected, after a long debate by ninety-nine against twenty-eight. His illustrious son, the future minister of the country, was present, and thus wrote, on the following day, to his mother:—"I cannot help expressing to you how happy, beyond description, I feel, in reflecting that my father was able to exert, in their full vigour, the sentiments and eloquence which have always distinguished him. His first speech took up half an hour, and was full of all his usual force and vivacity. He spoke a second time, in answer to Lord Weymouth, to explain the object of his motion, and his intention to follow it by one for the repeal of all the Acts of Parliament which form the system of chastisement. This he did in a flow of eloquence, and with a beauty of expression, animated and striking beyond expression."—Wright.

[2] Eldest son of Hugh, first Duke of Northumberland. His lordship had distin-

younger; and the elder will be as much disgusted, at least his family declare so for him, at missing the Treasurership of the Navy. The Duke of Marlborough's[1] avarice has been a theme of much abuse of late. I do not think this age has a right to cast a stone at the preceding. France to us sends most fair words; to America, stores and officers. Spain has seized an island from the Portuguese Queen; just as the powers of Europe treated the Empress-Queen on her father's death. I will not pity her Portuguese Majesty, lest some time or other she should accede to a partition of Poland. I will never more judge of princes at their coronations, but at their burials.

One effect the American war has not had, that it ought to have had; it has not brought us to our senses. Silly dissipation rather increases, and without an object. The present folly is late hours. Everybody tries to be particular by being too late; and, as everybody tries it, nobody is so. It is the fashion now to go to Ranelagh two hours after it is over. You may not believe this, but it is literal. The music ends at ten; the company go at twelve. Lord Derby's cook lately gave him warning. The man owned he liked his place, but said he should be killed by dressing suppers at three in the morning. The Earl asked him coolly at how much he valued his life? That is, he would have paid him for killing him. You see we have brought the spirit of calculation to perfection! I do not regret being old, for I see nothing I envy. To live in a crowd, to arrive everywhere too late, and to sell annuities for forty times more than I can ever pay, are not such supreme joys as to make me wish myself young again: indeed, one might execute all these joys at four-score. I am glad the Emperor did not visit us. I hope he is gone home, thinking France the most trifling nation in Europe.

I am extremely glad that Lady Lucy [Mann's niece] is so much mended, and I trust she will live to reward your nephew's great merit towards her. I do believe, with your physicians, that warm weather will re-establish you. Patience I need not preach to you —it is part of you; but I will tell you what would expedite your recovery miraculously—the sea-air. Go to Leghorn, and drive on the shore; go out in a boat for a few hours: you will walk well in half-a-dozen. I have experienced this in as short a time as I pre-

guished himself greatly in the important action of Lexington, and the reduction of Fort Washington, &c. On the death of his father, in 1786, he succeeded to the family honours.—WRIGHT.

[1] The great General of Queen Anne.—WALPOLE.

scribe. You will be angry, perhaps,—I mean, as much as you can be,—but I am not sorry you have a little gout; it will be a great preservative.

1648. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, June 19, 1777.

I THANK you for your notices, dear Sir, and shall remember that on Prince William. I did see the 'Monthly Review,' but hope one is not guilty of the death of every man who does not make one the dupe of a forgery. I believe M'Pherson's success with 'Ossian' was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's poems and his death. I never knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie: he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them. If any man was to tell you that monkish rhymes had been dug up at Herculaneum, which was destroyed several centuries before there was any such poetry, should you believe it? Just the reverse is the case of Rowley's pretended poems. They have all the elegance of Waller and Prior, and more than Lord Surrey—but I have no objection to anybody believing what he pleases. I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius —but I cannot think that Rowley foresaw metres that were invented long after he was dead, or that our language was more refined at Bristol in the reign of Henry V. than it was at Court under Henry VIII. One of the chaplains of the Bishop of Exeter has found a line of Rowley in Hudibras—the monk might foresee that too! The prematurity of Chatterton's genius is, however, full as wonderful, as that such a prodigy as Rowley should never have been heard of till the eighteenth century. The youth and industry of the former are miracles, too, yet still more credible. There is not a symptom in the poems, but the old words, that savours of Rowley's age—change the old words for modern, and the whole construction is of yesterday.

1649. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, June 29, 1777.

I AM heartily vexed, Madam, at Lady Warwick's misadventure See what comes of an education at Ampthill! Mr. Vernon, if he cares about grandchildren, should take away his daughters directly, or they will never have anything but peaches in brandy. The summer has made a *fausse-couche* too; I have no fruit, no flowers, no thrushes, no blackbirds. It is quite a folly to lay out vast sums in making landscapes in England; we have no weather to enjoy them, except one jubilee in five-and-twenty years. Our ancestors had more sense; they stuck themselves in a hole behind a hill, fenced out every wind with walls, and made a glass turret on the top of their mansions, not for a prospect, but to enjoy the few moments when the sun should condescend to come in person and look after his apple-orchards and hop-grounds. They were not so absurd as to import peaches, and nectarines, and pine-apples from the south, and Highlanders from the Orcades to look after them. Since we will give ourselves such torrid airs I wonder we do not go stark and tattoo ourselves. If I have got in our natural fruit, hay, and you will have a good fire of British oak, I purpose to wait on Lord Ossory and your Ladyship on the 16th or 17th of July, and instead of brushing through dripping shrubberies, we will keep ourselves warm with hot cockles and blindman's-buff, and other old English sudorifics. My Lady Townshend, in the days of her wit, said, that Mrs. Clive's face rose on Strawberry-hill and made it sultry; but I assure you, you may sit now in her beams when she is in her zenith without being tanned.

They say Lady Elizabeth Conway's match is one of the apocryphal in the list of the forty couples which the town has laid out. I hope the other your Ladyship feared, is so too. I wish any you wish may take place, but you shall not meddle a moment after the parson has said grace, for though you have the majesty of Juno, you shall never be invoked as Lucina. I even doubt whether little Guy would not have come to perfection, if you had not gone to Warwick Castle till autumn. In short nothing can pacify me but a Lord Gowran. I wish uncle Richard had stayed with you a month, and then who knows what a spiteful fit might have done!

I will try to take Crawfurd by storm, and hurry him into my chaise. If I give him warning, he will be sure of disappointing me.

Are you not glad, Madam, there is an end of talking of poor Dr. Dodd? I felt excessively for him, without a good opinion, for between the law and his friends, he suffered a thousand deaths. They say, the tragedy of the father that accompanied the son, diverted most of the attention from Dr. Dodd.

A strange thing happened on Thursday, which I cannot tell you accurately, as it was translated to me through two or three very imperfect druggerwomen. He received a box, in which were two or three small boxes. In the first a black one, in which he found a cornelian seal, with his own cypher and crest. Oh! I forgot to tell you *who* did—Mr. Child, of Osterley Park. With the seal was a writing, desiring him never to let the seal go out of his own hands. I was delighted, and concluded this was a talisman. No. In another box was a mourning-ring, with a topaz, others say an emerald, and some say the cornelian was an emerald. On the ring was a motto in Latin, implying, "Keep this in memory of a dying friend." There was a third box, or there was not, and nobody knows what was in it, whether there was one or not. The cabalists are of opinion, as the delivery was made on the eve of Dr. Dodd's death, that the bequest was his, and that the seal implies that there is a forgery to come out on Mr. Child.

I am too late for the post, and, as I must go to town on Tuesday, I shall keep my letter till then, as it will have but one stage instead of two, with the chance of a postscript.

Le voici ce postscript.—I am *au fait* of Mr. Child's mysterious present; I mean the circumstances, not the solution of the enigma, which it would be a pity to know yet. The first was a cornelian seal, with R. C., and Mr. Child's crest, and these words, "*nemini confide sigillum.*" No. 2 was a mourning-ring, with a topaz seal, cypher and crest as above, and round it this oracular sentence, "*Anchora sacra decepit,*" which leave a charming latitude of guessing.

Oh! but here is another event more inexplicable still!—a letter has been sent to the club at Stapleton's, directed to "L. S. D." No mortal man could be found to expound those letters: not an Œdipus in the whole society. At last a great adept, the sage John Manners, claimed the letter. His title was contested, for, though few clubs are Academies of Inscriptions, the members were clear-sighted enough to see that L. S. D. did not signify John Manners. However, he pleaded his great experience in pounds, shillings, and pence, and insisted that the hieroglyphic letters in question, standing for those denominations, were more likely to be addressed to him than to any

fellow of the society; and as far as great industry in appropriating to himself the things typified, nobody could deny the proposition; but as such a precedent would be too dangerous, and might encourage him to seize every piece of paper that commenced with these letters, the occult packet is put in sequestration, and hitherto no man has ventured to break the seal.

1650. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1777.

THERE is a blacker cloud than the rain come over my prospects, Madam, and I must wait its explosion! Without a figure, there is little chance of my being able to wait on you on the 16th, or sooner, which I see would be more convenient. A courier arrived yesterday from the Duchess of Gloucester to fetch Dr. Jebb and Adair to the Duke, though with little probability of their arriving time enough. We had heard he was ill, and that the surgeon that attends him had advised his setting out immediately for England, the heats of Italy having done him infinite prejudice. I believe the continual change of air and motion were the chief objects in view. He grew every day so much worse that he was put into his post-chaise and removed from Verona, but the Duchess says she did not expect he would be able to get beyond the first post. To overwhelm her completely, the little Prince is not in a much better state. The distress of my poor nieces, who doat on their mother, and of my brother with his two sons-in-law so ill, and with his two daughters in so melancholy a situation, calls for all the little comfort I am able to give them, and I dare not think of pleasing myself when there are such afflictions in my family. I will not dwell on these misfortunes. You are so good as to be amused with my idle gossiping, but I have no right to put your sensibility to different trials.

I have heard no more of the mysterious packets, nor indeed of anything else. I have no correspondents in town, and my French one does not trouble her head with anything beyond her own circle. I believe nothing I read in the newspapers about America; indeed they are arrived at a pitch of ignorance, that would not be excusable in Greenland. They acquainted us last week with great solemnity, that the Duchess of Queensberry was the famous Catherine Howard:—they might as well have said she was Anne Boleyn. My humble opinion is, that we shall never recover America, and that France will take care that we shall never recover ourselves. What scratches

we may give or receive, *en attendant*, seem very little to the purpose; probably we shall tumble into a war with France before the latter quite intends it, though she may not care much if we do, and then we shall be frightened out of our senses, or into them, when it is too late. But all this is no business of mine, who have lived my time, and do not, as old folks often do, propose to govern the world after I am out of it. Few persons know when they should die; I mean when they should have done living. I have taken up my strulbrugship, only reserving a comfortable annuity of cheerfulness and amusement, as monarchs do who resign their crowns, and intend to have all the pleasures of royalty without the cares; but as Care never accedes to that compact, their majesties, and I their ape, find ourselves mistaken. You see storms reach my little hill, as well as mount Athos.

I wish your Ladyship had entered farther into criticisms on Dr. Robertson. I dare to answer I should approve them as much as Lord Ossory does. The very word *critical* is indeed a commentary. His philosophic solutions are as paltry as possible. You are, in good truth, a more real philosopher, Madam, when you can smile over such a mishap as you relate, and

> Be mistress of yourself, though glasses break!

My little hexagon has been more fortunate, and is finished without an accident. I trust it will draw a visit from your Ladyship; you defrauded me of one this spring. If I should receive any good news from my unhappy Duchess, I shall not give up the 16th; if not, I must defer it to a moment when I shall be more at liberty.

P.S. Another letter is come, dated three days later, with better accounts. The Duke had borne a journey of two days very well, and slept eight hours. If these good symptoms continue, I shall treat myself with keeping my engagement. Mr. Beauclerk and Lady Di dined here to-day; he looks so much less ill than he did, that one need never despair of any recovery after his and Lazarus's.

1651. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, July 6, 1777.

I don't know anybody so much in the wrong as you are for not coming to me this summer; you would see such a marvellous closet,

so small, so perfect, so respectable; you would swear it came out of Havering in the Bower, and that Catherine de Valois used to retire into it to write to Owen Tudor. Lady Di's drawings—no offence to yours, are hung on Indian blue damask, the ceiling, door and surbase are gilt, and in the window are two brave *fleur de lis* and a lion of England, all royally crowned in painted glass, which as Queen Catherine never did happen to write a *billet doux* in this closet, signify Beauclerc, the denomination of the tower. This cabinet is to be sacred and not shown to the profane, as the drawings are not for the eyes of the vulgar. Yours shall have a place, which is the greatest honour I can do them. Miss Pope the actress, who is at Mrs. Clive's, dined here yesterday, and literally shed tears, though she did not know the story. I think this is more to Lady Di's credit, than a tom-tit pecking at painted fruit. The ceiling was fortunately finished some time ago. My plaisterer is turned raving Methodist, and has sent me a frantic letter without sense or grammar, but desiring leave to open me a new plan of the Gospel. I am glad he had no *new light* about making stucco!

Those gentry the Methodists will grow very troublesome, or worse; they were exceedingly unwilling to part with that impudent hypocrite, Dr. Dodd, and not less, to have forgery criminal. I own I felt very much for the poor wretch's protracted sufferings—but that was not the motive of their countenance; I cannot bear a militant arch inquisitor, or an impostor in a tabernacle. Thank you for your reply to the former, &c.

I have no more Gazettes Littéraires, or Politiques. Linguet, the outcast of France, has published one here that makes some noise; part is satire on us, part panegyric, but in general very superficial. I have an anecdote apropos to him that is very curious. I will tell it you some day or other, but as it is a secret, I must not communicate it to the post-office.

They have sent me from town a fourth volume of the 'Archæologia, or Old Women's Logic;' the first paragraph is as complete nonsense as my plaisterer's letter.

Don't let this horrid weather put you out of humour with your *Garden*, though I own it is pity we should have brought gardening to perfection, and have too bad a climate to enjoy it. It is strictly true this year, as I have often said, that ours is the most beautiful country in the world, when framed and glazed; but remember you can make the sun shine when you please, and as much as you please, and yet the verdure of your garden will be ever green. You

are an excellent parish priest, catechise and make terriers I believe in perfection; but pray do not forget poor poetry, your natural vocation, as you have done so long; but you must be everything, an inventor of musical instruments, a painter, and a law suitor—

Besides a hundred freaks that died in thinking.[1]

Well, I cannot help loving you with all your faults and an your perfections.

I am just now in great trouble, though a little relieved to-day by a better account. The Duke of Gloucester is extremely ill, and my poor niece in despair! They are coming if they can to England for a little time, as the heat of the south is too mighty for him. How dear has ambition cost her! Adieu.

As it is right to be impartial, which I am not naturally, I must tell you that at the end of the new Archæologia there is a very good essay on ancient castles, with very curious matter, by a Mr. King.[2] I don't know who he is—but it rains again, and there is no bearing it.[3]

[1] Dryden, of Villiers Duke of Buckingham.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] Edward King died April 16, 1807.—CUNNINGHAM.

[3]

TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

DEAR SIR: *Aston, July 27, 1777.*

FOR the last fortnight of fine weather I said to myself, "lounge, sleep, and be idle; break not thy repose even by writing a letter." I did so, but a great thunder-storm after drowning me fourteen good acres of hay, and afterwards leaving them to rot under a cold dun sky, has driven me again to my fire-side, and to my *portfeuille*, where I find your favour of the 6th to my shame unanswered. You who care not a rush about your own hay, will not call the spoiling of mine any judgment upon me for my *accidie* which Chaucer's parson will tell you is one of the deadliest of the seven deadly sins. My quondam patron and patroness [Lord and Lady Holdernesse] are gone to Hornby Castle and have called my curate Alderson thither. I conjecture the thunder-storm would just give them the meeting about Ferrybridge, which would serve to corroborate her Ladyship's good opinion of the north, especially as it has been succeeded by such cold and comfortless weather. I suppose my Lord and Lady Carmarthen are of the party and a pleasant one I trust it is. Had I not reason when I pronounced that paw word—Independency—to the Archbishop, to be proud that I could pronounce it?

Nobody sends me anything but you. It was but yesterday that the Epistle to Dr. Shebbeare reached Aston, and that not sent to me, but to Mr. Verelst. There are good lines in it, and a happy mixture of the careless and serious, the burlesque and heroic. The Ode [to Sir Fletcher Norton] too has its merit, but it seems *manqué*, all the lines in Horace are not alluded to, as *nomen tulit ab Africâ*, and *Carthaginis flammæ impiæ, &c.* which in these kind of imitations ought always to be observed.[1] Tell me whether this criticism be not a just one. You should have

[1] All this is disguise. The Epistle to Shebbeare, and the Ode to Norton, were by Mason, and published this year in 4to. by Almon, as by the author of the 'Heroic Epistle.'—CUNNINGHAM.

1652. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

Strawberry Hill, July 7, 1777.

As I know your Lordship and Lady Nuneham are so good as to interest yourselves about the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of telling you, that, though the express on Saturday was as bad as possible, yet another letter yesterday from the Duke's surgeon, dated three days later, brought a more favourable account. His Royal Highness had been taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, as it was thought nothing but change of air and motion could save him. He bore the travelling for two days very well, and got eight hours of sleep. The third day he was less well from fatigue, but the surgeon did not think him otherwise worse. I hope in God this alarm will pass off like the former!—but nothing, except her own words, could paint the agonies of the Duchess. She is alarmed too for the little Prince. They are coming to England, but not to stay, as Italian winters agree with the Duke, though the summers are so prejudicial.

Now I have taken this liberty, my dear Lord, I must take a little more; you know my old admiration and envy are your garden. I do not grudge Pomona or Sir James Cockburn their hot-houses, nor intend to ruin myself by raising sugar and water in tanner's bark

contrived to have let me had a copy of this, because I ought not to come after an East Indian Governor in early intelligence of this sort.

What a glorious figure does Great Britain, as Empress of the sea, make in the papers of the last week. I fancy we shall hear in a short time that Dublin is in the possession of the provincials. I had rather it were Edinburgh for the sake of my Scotch bookseller. After Great Britain I think Mason *versus* Murray makes no contemptible eclat—'tis quite a pleasure to see one's name so public. My lawyers give me a pleasant account of my Lord Chancellor's decision, who acquitted the said Murray of a contempt of his court because he was advised to it by an attorney. Hence in chancery, as at St. Omers, you may do what you please, provided you have the opinion of a Dr. to support you, and I suppose our attorneys are full as good as their casuistical divines; at least his Lordship thinks so. I should be glad to hear in your next what accounts there are of the Duke of Gloucester, and pray send me all the news you can, and Gazettes Littéraires when you can spare them. Were you to send pacquets to Mr. Verelst's house in St. James's Square, with a card to Mr. Manesty, saying only "Mr. Manesty is desired to forward this parcel to Aston the first time he sends anything down to Mr. Verelst," I should receive them safe and with little trouble to your servants.

Yours very sincerely,

W. Mason

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

and peach skins. The Flora Nunehamica is the height of my ambition, and if your Linnæus should have any disciple that would condescend to look after my little flower-garden, it would be the delight of my eyes and nose, provided the cataracts of heaven are ever shut again! Not one proviso do I make, but that the pupil be not a Scot. We had peace and warm weather before the inundation of that northern people, and therefore I beg to have no Attila for my gardener.

Apropos, don't your Lordship think that another set of legislators, the Maccaronis and Maccaronesses, are very wise? People abuse them for turning days, nights, hours and seasons topsy-turvy; but surely it was upon mature reflection. We had a set of customs and ideas borrowed from the continent that by no means suited our climate. Reformers bring back things to their natural course. Notwithstanding what I said in spite in the paragraph above, we are in truth but Greenlanders and ought to conform to our climate. We should lay in store of provisions and candles and masquerades and coloured lamps for ten months in the year, and shut out our twilight and enjoy ourselves. In September and October we may venture out of our ark and make our hay and gather in our corn, and go to horse-races, and kill pheasants and partridges for stock for our winter's supper. I sailed in a skiff and pair this morning to Lady Cecilia Johnston, and found her, like a good housewife, sitting over her fire, with her cats and dogs and birds and children. She brought out a dram to warm me and my servants, and we were very merry and comfortable. As Lady Nuneham has neither so many two-footed or four-footed cares upon her hands, I hope her hands have been better employed.

I wish I could peep over her shoulder one of these wet mornings!

Adieu, my dear Lord; forgive all my babble. Yesterday's letter raised my spirits, and I love to impart my satisfaction to those I love, which, with all due respect, I must take leave to say I feel for you, and am most sincerely, &c.

1653. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Strawberry Hill, July 10, 1777.

Don't be alarmed at this thousandth letter in a week. This is more to Lady Hamilton [1] than to you. Pray tell her I have seen *Monsieur la Bataille d'Agincourt.*[2] He brought me her letter yesterday: and I kept him to sup, *sleep* in the modern phrase, and breakfast here this morning; and flatter myself he was, and she will be, content with the regard I paid to her letter.

The weather is a thought warmer to-day, and I am as busy as bees are about their hay. My *Hayssians*[3] have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the Landgrave.[4]

I am glad your invasion[5] is blown over. I fear I must invite those flat-bottomed vessels hither, as the Swissess Necker has directed them to the port of Twickenham. Madame de Blot is too fine, and Monsieur Schomberg one of the most disagreeable, cross, contemptuous savages I ever saw. I have often supped with him at the Duchesse de Choiseul's, and could not bear him; and now I must be *charmé*, and *pénétré*, and *comblé*, to see him: and I shall act it very ill, as I always do when I don't do what I like. Madame Necker's letter is as affected and *précieuse*, as if Marmontel had written it for a Peruvian milk-maid. She says I am a philosopher, and as like Madame de Sévigné as two peas—who was as unlike a philosopher as a gridiron. As I have none of Madame de Sévigné's natural easy wit, I am rejoiced that I am no more like a philosopher neither, and still less like a *philosophe;* which is a being compounded of D'Urfey and Diogenes, a pastoral coxcomb, and a supercilious brute.

[1] The first wife of Sir William Hamilton, envoy extraordinary at the court of Naples. She was a Miss Barlow.—Wright.

[2] M. le Chevalier d'Azincourt, a French antiquary, long settled in Italy. I. B. L. Seroux d'Agincourt, born at Beauvais in 1730, died at Rome in 1814, having, during thirty-six years, laboured assiduously in the composition of his grand work, "Histoire de l'Art par les Monumens, depuis sa Décadence au Quatrième Siècle jusqu'à son Renouvellement au Seizième."—Wright.

[3] Hessians.

[4] An allusion to the seventeen thousand which had been hired for the American service, by treaties entered into in the preceding year with the Landgravine of Hesse Cassel, the Duke of Brunswick, and the Hereditary Prince of Hesse Cassel.—Wright.

[5] A party of French nobility then in England, who were to have made a visit at Park Place.

1654. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.[1]

Strawberry Hill, July 13, 1777.

You have perhaps, Sir, paid too much regard to the observations I took the liberty to make, by your order, to a few passages in 'Vitellia,' and I must hope they were in consequence of your own judgment too. I do not doubt of its success on the stage, if well acted; but I confess I would answer for nothing with the present set of actors, who are not capable in tragedy of doing any justice to it. Mrs. Barry seems to me very unequal to the principal part, to which Mrs. Yates alone is suited. Were I the author, I should be very sorry to have my tragedy murdered, perhaps miscarry. Your reputation is established; you will never forfeit it yourself—and to give your works to unworthy performérs is like sacrificing a daughter to a husband of bad character. As to my offering it to Mr. Colman, I could merely be the messenger. I am scarce known to him, have no right to ask a favour of him, and I hope you know me enough to think that I am too conscious of my own insignificance and private situation to give myself an air of protection, and more particularly to a work of yours, Sir. What could I say, that would carry greater weight, than "This piece is by the author of 'Braganza?'"

A tragedy can never suffer by delay: a comedy may, because the allusions or the manners represented in it may be temporary. I urge this, not to dissuade your presenting 'Vitellia' to the stage, but to console you if both theatres should be engaged next winter. My own interests, from my time of life, would make me with reason more impatient than you to see it represented, but I am jealous of the honour of your poetry, and I should grieve to see 'Vitellia' at Covent-garden—not that, except Mrs. Yates, I have any partiality to the tragic actors at Drury-lane, though Smith did not miscarry in 'Braganza'—but I speak from experience. I attended 'Caractacus'

[1] Robert Jephson, Esq., born in Ireland 1736, died 1803. He attained the rank of captain in the 73rd regiment, and when it was reduced at the peace in 1763, he retired on half-pay, and procured, through the influence of Mr. Gerard Hamilton, a pension on the Irish establishment. Besides several tragedies, he wrote the farce of "Two Strings to your Bow," and "Roman Portraits," a poem. Hardy, in his Memoirs of Lord Charlemont, says, "he was much caressed and sought after by several of the first societies in Dublin, as he possessed much wit and pleasantry, and, when not overcome by the spleen, was extremely amusing and entertaining." He was a member of the Irish House of Commons. Walpole's "Thoughts on Tragedy" had been addressed, in 1775, to this gentleman.—WRIGHT.

last winter, and was greatly interested, both from my friendship for Mr. Mason and from the excellence of the poetry. I was out of all patience; for though a young Lewis played a subordinate part very well, and Mrs. Hartley looked her part charmingly, the Druids were so massacred and Caractacus so much worse, that I never saw a more barbarous exhibition. Instead of hurrying 'The Law of Lombardy,'[1] which, however, I shall delight to see finished, I again wish you to try comedy. To my great astonishment there were more parts performed admirably in 'The School for Scandal,'[2] than I almost ever saw in any play. Mrs. Abington was equal to the first of her profession, Yates (the husband), Parsons, Miss Pope, and Palmer, all shone. It seemed a marvellous resurrection of the stage. Indeed, the play had as much merit as the actors. I have seen no comedy that comes near it since the 'Provoked Husband.'

I said I was jealous of your fame as a poet, and I truly am. The more rapid your genius is, labour will but the more improve it. I am very frank, but I am sure that my attention to your reputation will excuse it. Your facility in writing exquisite poetry may be a disadvantage; as it may not leave you time to study the other requisites of tragedy so much as is necessary. Your writings deserve to last for ages; but to make any work last, it must be finished in all parts to perfection. You have the first requisite to that perfection, for you can sacrifice charming lines, when they do not tend to improve the whole. I admire this resignation so much, that I wish to turn it to your advantage. Strike out your sketches as suddenly as you please, but retouch and retouch them, that the best judges may for ever admire them. The works that have stood the test of ages, and been slowly approved at first, are not those that have dazzled contemporaries and borne away their applause, but those whose intrinsic and laboured merit have shone the brighter on examination. I would not curb your genius, Sir, if I did not trust it would recoil with greater force for having obstacles presented to it.

You will forgive my not having sent you the 'Thoughts on Comedy,'[3] as I promised. I have had no time to look them over

[1] "The Law of Lombardy" was brought out at Drury-lane in 1779, but was only acted nine nights.—WRIGHT.

[2] Sheridan's "School for Scandal" was first performed at Drury-lane on the 8th of May, 1777.—WRIGHT.

[3] Walpole's "Thoughts on Comedy" were written in 1775 and 1776, and will be found in his Works.—WRIGHT.

and put them into shape. I have been and am involved in most unpleasant affairs of family, that take up my whole thoughts and attention. The melancholy situation of my nephew Lord Orford engages me particularly, and I am not young enough to excuse postponing business and duties for amusement. In truth, I am really too old not to have given up literary pleasures. Nobody will tell one when one grows dull, but one's time of life ought to tell it one. I long ago determined to keep the archbishop in 'Gil Blas' in my eye, when I should advance to his caducity; but as dotage steals in at more doors than one, perhaps the sermon I have been preaching to you is a symptom of it. You must judge of that, Sir. If I fancy I have been wise, and have only been peevish, throw my lecture into the fire. I am sure the liberties I have taken with you deserve no indulgence, if you do not discern true friendship at the bottom of them.

1655. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, July 15, 1777.

I HAVE barely time to write a line, and it is to thank your Ladyship for your very kind letter, which I will obey the first instant I am at liberty. I came to town this morning on business with my brother, for Lord Orford is no better, and every thing is in confusion. I had a letter from the Duchess; the Duke had had a tolerable night, and she begins to hope the crisis is over, but he still keeps his bed, and is as weak as possible. The hot weather, and my ocean of troubles, serious or trifling, affect my nerves so, that I can scarce write. I am a fine Hercules to think of doing twenty times more than I have strength for!

1656. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, July 17, 1777.

YOU are very kind, my dear Sir, in your inquiries about the Duke of Gloucester. You will have heard, long before you receive this, how very ill his Royal Highness has been. I wish I could say I was yet quite easy about him. We are very impatient for to-morrow's letters. It is unfortunate that he did not pass the summer again at Castel Gondolfo. The heats and nauseous air of Venice immediately affected him deeply, and I fear his Royal Highness's

mind was not in a situation to resist outward impressions. He fell away exceedingly, had a flux at Padua, and at Verona was so reduced, that he was persuaded to return to England. Before he could set out, he grew daily so much worse, that he was taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, and made journeys for two days of twenty-six and thirty miles; at the end of which he slept eight hours, and mended a little. The Duchess, in the mean time, half distracted, sent a courier for Dr. Jebb and Adair; who, we hope, arrived last Saturday; for Dr. Jebb promised to post without pulling off his clothes. The Duke got to Trent, and found himself refreshed from the cool air of the mountains: but his dysentery returned with violent pains. He keeps his bed; but when the last letters came away, which was on the 4th of this month, his surgeon-page hoped the extremity of the danger was over. It is, indeed, impossible ever to be secure about so precarious a constitution; and, unless his Royal Highness's mind is set at peace about his family, I fear he has not strength to resist the anxiety that preys upon a state of health too obnoxious to every kind of attack. To add to the Duchess's misery, her little boy was in a bad way at the same moment.

You inquire about America, and what Lord Percy says. I cannot give you information from any authority. I live here, and see nobody of either side that knows anything. The Duchess's three daughters[1] are, by his Royal Highness's goodness, lodged in Hampton Court Park, which is very near me, and take up most of my time. They are charming girls: I don't mean only their persons, but good, sweet-tempered, admirably brought up, and amiable in every respect. I try to amuse and improve them; though I have little to do on the latter head, and they are so reasonable and easily contented, even with the company of an old uncle, that the other is not difficult. But what is all this to America, except that it proves how little it occupies me? The last Gazette informed us that General Howe was but then going to open the campaign, having been in want of campaign equipage. I do not know that Lord Percy says anything; for I have heard he is very circumspect. He certainly does not talk of pacification. He is said to say, that this campaign will finish the war. I doubt his having said so, as the Ministers are not said to be of that opinion. In the mean time, American privateers infest

[1] The ladies Laura, Maria, and Horatia Waldegrave, daughters of the Duchess of Gloucester by her first husband, James Earl of Waldegrave.—WALPOLE.

our coasts; they keep Scotland in alarms, and even the harbour of Dublin has been newly strengthened with cannon. But there is a much bigger cloud ready to burst. The open protection and countenance given by France to the Americans is come to a crying height. We complain: I know not what civil words they give, but they certainly give us no satisfaction. The general opinion is, that we are at the eve of a war with them. Should the Americans receive any blow, my own sentiments are, that France would openly espouse their quarrel, not being at all disposed to let them be crushed. You know that at the beginning of this contest I told you I thought it would be an affair of long duration. A French war would abridge it—but how? I will prophesy nothing on that head. I don't like to look into that book.

I have no events to send you. London, I suppose, is very empty at this season; but I have little dealings with it. The affairs of my family find me full employment, and it is the most suitable one at my time of life. Adieu!

1657. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Saturday night, July 19, 1777.

I WOULD have given sixpence for a quarter of an hour this morning to have answered your Ladyship's letter, but three persons dropped in one after another, and kept me till I was too late to dress, and so I made Mr. Morrice wait half-an-hour for dinner. It was a party made for Lady Blandford, who at last did not come, nor Lady Jane Scott, who was gone to town to buy mourning for the Duchess of Queensberry, who died on Thursday of a surfeit of cherries, as my old Countess of Desmond of robbing a walnut-tree, for the Duchess's beauty at seventy-seven was as extraordinary as the other's at hundred and forty years.

I am now positively, and ultimately, and unputoffably determined, if you will let me, to be at Ampthill on Tuesday se'nnight. The Duke of Gloucester is better, and again set out; but I have so much to do this week that I cannot get away sooner, and I think the day I named comes within the time prescribed before Lord Ossory's journey to the north. I have made no idle excuses, for you see I have not stirred an inch from home this whole summer. Two days ago I did fear the gout was coming: I had walked too much in the heat, and as exercise always hurts me, I waked in the night in great pain; but it is gone, and, I trust, for some time.

I heartily pity Mr. Fitzpatrick for being engaged in this abominable war, that is big with another, and both with ruin. Nobody do I see but holds that with France unavoidable, since they are determined to try how much we will bear; and I hear of ministers, and of more ministerlings who would be fain thought to have had no share in the culpability of our measures. I am sure they who have not had, have cause to congratulate themselves. My cousin, Dick Walpole, one of my this morning's visitors, told me there is a fresh account of Lord Cornwallis's defeat; if true, it is not owned. Lord Dysart has lost his youngest brother William, whose ship, 'The Repulse,' with all in it, an hundred and fifty! sunk in a storm on the 26th of *last December*. This shows what early and certain intelligence we get from America! Lady Bridget, whom I do not quote as gospel, told me last night that it is far from certain that Lord Mulgrave is safe. I doubt, as the Apocalypse says, the Seals of the last Book are not opened yet!

1658. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 4, 1777.

You know I do not stand upon debtor and creditor with you, but should have indulged my pleasure of writing to you, if I had been master of a moment's leisure or peace of mind. The various distresses and misfortunes of my family have engrossed me entirely. My nephew [Orford] continues to fluctuate between violence and stupidity; as the last is not alarming, and there are scarce hopes of any comfortable recovery, I am inclined to wish it took place totally. In the mean time his affairs are as distracted, and have driven me into a paper war with his agent. The Duke of Gloucester is still exceedingly ill; Dr. Jebb flatters us he shall bring him to England, but promises nothing more. The Bishop of Exeter has been dying these nine months, but at last seems recovering. All these calamities and their consequential details have left me no time for amusement or attention to anything else, and unless American privateers attack Hampton Court, I shall forget almost that there are thirteen colonies. In good truth they seem fully able to take care of themselves, nay, at leisure to return our invasions. If they burn Edinburgh, I shall not cry fire.

Lord John Cavendish is returned from a visit to his sister in Ireland, and gives a droll description of Viceroy Buckingham's

entrenchments, which are not quite so strong as dictator Washington's, except in gin shops. The rest of the encampment consists in three tents. The Ossianites rave against Howe. Madame de Noailles the Ambassador's wife arrives to-day with a sprig, I believe, of rue in her mouth merely to keep her from laughing. Cunningham sailed from Dunkirk with orders to be very civil till in wide ocean, but mistook the channel for it, and made nine prizes, which if he sent to Dunkirk will obtain his pardon. I heard this morning that France has fifteen thousand men in India, who I suppose have orders not to take Bengal within sight of the French coast. A good courtisan told me last night, as a counterpoise to all these *unforeseen accidents*, that Lord Chatham has had a fall from his horse, in a fit. The bells are ringing—perhaps on that account.

I have no more Gazettes Littéraires yet, but I have a new work that I will lend you, that you will read, though very tiresome and ill written, printed here by some of the excrement of Paris. It is called *Mémoires Secrets pour servir à l'Histoire de la République des Lettres en France depuis* 1762 *jusqu'à nos jours*. It is a journal of all the minor politics, literature, theatric anecdotes, scandal and fashions of that country, and as all those heads compose much of their politics, it is the history of everything but their foreign politics. There are eight thick duodecimos, ill written, with no judgment, and very partial, almost against everybody and thing, however it shows them, and that they make little better figure than we do, though we are so low! I think a man of sense and taste should blush to be talked of in either country. I think you are too difficult however about the 'Ode' and the 'Epistle to Shebbeare,' which will survive when all our trash is forgotten. What do you think of the immortal lines on Cox's Museum? I beg your pardon too, if I cannot see the sin of omission in some lines of Horace not being paraphrased in so heinous a light. The author does not profess a translation, and surely was at liberty to take only what parts he found to his purpose. If I had time, I dare to say I could prove to you that the Ode is a stricter imitation than those of Pope; but alas! I have other guess *besogne;* however, to show you I have not totally abandoned all the occupations I love, I will mention an instance I chanced upon t'other day of the barbarity of the French language in Poetry. I happened to open a volume of Voltaire at Lord Ossory's, and found this beginning of a scene in one of his plays:—

Enfin donc desormais

Match me that hemistich if you can in a tragedy of the Sauromatæ.

Garrick is dying of the yellow jaundice on the success of Henderson, a young actor from Bath—*Enfin donc desormais* there must never be a good player again. As Voltaire and Garrick are the god and goddess of Envy, the latter would put a stop to procreation, as the former would annihilate the traces of all antiquity, if there were no other gods but they.

I do not wonder you have had such bad crops both in your meadows and in chancery; consider how long since any sun shone on either. My *Hayssians* have cost me as much as if I had hired them of the Landgrave. One would think the elements this summer came from Scotland too; and I am surprised Sir John Dalrymple or Macpherson has not told us from the *dépôt des affaires étrangères*, that the sun is an enemy to English constitutions. *Vivent les Brouillards!* I will finish with anticipating the best trait in the books I promise you. The witty Piron made a visit to that old bigot, the Archbishop of—(not York, but) Paris, soon after his issuing a thundering mandate against some French whigs, of which his grace had certainly not written one word. He asked Piron, "*L'avez-vous lu?*"—"*Oui, Monseigneur, et vous?*"

Yours ever,

H. W.

1659. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 8, 1777.

My incorrect impromptu deserved no thanks, Madam; nor should I have sent it but as it proved I left you with regret. I can snatch but moments for anything I like. I had chalked out a more pleasing plan for this part of my life, but it is sadly traversed, and I must submit. I received a most melancholy account yesterday of my nephew, who seems sinking into idiocy, and picks up straws. This state will be free from alarms, but probably will involve me again in the care of his affairs; however, I shall wait with patience for some certainty, nor embark without better authority than I did last time. I am not more easy about the Duke, whose situation is still very perilous; and if I did not know Dr. Jebb for the most despondent of men, my hopes would be small indeed; yet I by no means despair. I must count my pleasures too with my pains. My niece's match with Lord Cadogan, since she herself approves it

gives me great satisfaction. She is one of the best and most discreet young women in the world, and her husband, I am sure, is fortunate. You will think I have been mysterious, but believe me, I did not know it till yesterday. I had expected it, but was grown to think it would not be. Lord Suffolk is certainly to marry Lady Aylesford's daughter, Lady Charlotte. She cannot complain of being made a nurse, for he could have no other reason for marrying her, she is so plain, and I suppose he knows she is good or sensible. I said so to Lady Bridget Tollemache, and she replied, "How does one know whether a homely young woman is good or not before she is married?"—She is in the right.

It was Sir Charles and not George Montagu that is dead, as my hostess of St. Albans told me. Lord Villiers, who has fashioned away all he has, is to remove with his wife to his mother's, and live there. This was a great match. I am glad Lord Cadogan is past one-and-twenty, and wish all my nieces may marry fathers rather than sons.

Have you read General Burgoyne's rhodomontade, in which he almost promises to cross America in a hop, step, and a jump? I thought we were cured of hyperboles. He has sent over, too, a copy of his talk with the Indians, which they say is still more supernatural. I own I prefer General Howe's taciturnity, who at least, it he does nothing, does not break his word. It is supposed the latter is sailed to Boston, and that the former has kicked Ticonderoga into one of the lakes—I don't know which, I am no geographer.

I met the new French Ambassadress t'other night at the Prince of Masserano's, at Isleworth. She is a little mouse in a cheese, not ugly, but with no manner. I am glad summer is come along with her; I began to think it was taken by a privateer.

I am not going to make a job of you, Madam, nor to sell my friends to my relations, but I do wish you had Lord Villiers's house, and hope the name of the street will be no objection. It is brave, magnificently furnished, and in good taste. If Lord Ossory could get the lease, the furniture would be an immense pennyworth, as it has not been violated but by one ball and three or four assemblies. The rent, 450*l.*, is but the odd fifty beyond your present palace. It is seriously worth thinking about. There is a noble hall and staircase, an excellent drawing-room to the street, vast eating-room, and another chamber. On the first floor an anti-room, and three more very large rooms all four quintessenced with Adamitic mode, and

yet not filligreed into puerility like l'hotel de Derby. The back-stairs to the second floor, I am told, are bad; but must children and servants go to bed up the steps of the Capitol? Remember, nobody is in town, and this scarce known. I would advise Lord Ossory to seize the moment, were it but to sell again. Lord Buckingham was offered six hundred a year for his house. I would not advise anybody I loved to furnish a house like Lord Villiers's; but to buy one so furnished at an estimate second-hand, though quite new, is what I should call prudence in a man of Lord Ossory's rank and fortune. In short, I could step to you in my slippers; don't wonder I am eager. Pray send our Lord to town the moment he returns, and me such an answer as I shall like.

1660. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 11, 1777.

I WRITE in a most anxious moment, and tremble lest you should know worse than we have heard yet. I had a letter from the Duchess on Tuesday, that raised our hopes. Yesterday brought one from Dr. Jebb to my brother, that dashed them down again. Sir Edward, who is truly very sagacious in physical cases, does not despond; and I, always disposed to expect what I wish, and who do not believe that it is so easy to die as is imagined, do not quite despair—yet that word *quite* would scarce turn a scale against a feather. I dare not look farther, nor figure the distress of the Duchess, if the dreadful misfortune should happen. Lord Cholmondeley is gone to Trent, and will be of great use and comfort—but I will hope yet. Do not wonder, nor take it ill, that nobody thought of writing to you: think but of what the distress and confusion must be; and how little they could attend to anything but writing to England. I, here, only contemplating in melancholy tranquillity the misfortune hanging over my poor niece, should not write to many but you at such a moment. The Duke's family must be exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, and I fear barely able to go through their duty. You should pity them, not suspect them of neglect.

I can tell you nothing else that you will like much better. The conquest of America is put off to the millennium. It is hoped, and thence supposed, that General Howe is gone to take some place, or beat some army, that is more practicable than dislodging Washington.

Burgoyne has sent over a manifesto, that, if he was to overrun ten provinces, would appear too pompous; and yet, let him achieve ever so little, it will be sure of not being depreciated; so great is the want of something to keep up the spirits of the people, who stare a little at being bullied on their own coasts, after being told that five thousand men would overrun all America. France sits by and laughs, receives our remonstrances, sends us an ambassadress, and winks on Dr. Franklin, that it is all the comfort she will give us.—I believe you will not wish me to expatiate on *that* chapter.

Lady Mary Churchill's eldest daughter[1] is married to Lord Cadogan. She is very pretty, amiable, and eight-and-twenty; he, rich and fifty. It is a great match for her, and in my opinion preferable to one with most of our youths, who dissipate enormous fortunes in a couple of years. I have not time to say more now, nor any event to tell you.

1661. TO LADY CECILIA JOHNSTON.[2]

Aug. 19, 1777.

Our abdicated monarch, Lear,[3]
And bonny Dame Cadwallader,[4]
With a whole theatre in one[5] from France,
And Raftor,[6] wont th' Eclipse in Hays to dance,
Next Saturn's day, if fair or foul,
On bacon, ham, and chicken-fowl,
Intend with Horace—no great bard,
Nor one of Epicurus' herd—
To dine. Oh, would divine Cecilia deign,
With her brave warrior[7] to augment the train
From every castle famed in days of yore,
Of which, or poets or romancers tell,
For wit and cheerfulness, and humour—store,
My Strawberry, my Strawberry, shall bear away the bell.

[1] Mary Churchill, eldest daughter of Charles and Lady Mary Churchill (the natural son of Mrs. Oldfield and natural daughter of Miss Skerret, mistress, then wife of Sir Robert Walpole). Her marriage with Lord Cadogan was dissolved in 1796, and the marriage of one of her daughters by Lord Cadogan was dissolved, in 1810.—Cunningham.

[2] Now first published.—Cunningham.

[3] Garrick.—Cunningham.

[4] Mrs. Clive.—Cunningham.

[5] Le Texier.—Cunningham.

[6] Raftor played 'Luna' in 'The Rehearsal.' See vol, vi. p. 25.—Cunningham.

[7] Her husband. See Index.—Cunningham.

1662. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1777.

As I am sure the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester have no well wishers more sincere than your Lordship and Lady Nuneham, I flatter myself I shall give both pleasure by taking the liberty of letting you know that all the letters of the 12th are in a new style, and speak of his Royal Highness as much mended. Those of the 8th were full of despair. He had set up an hour, and the Duchess had been out to take the air, after not quitting one floor for seven weeks, nor writing for three, so immediate had been her apprehensions. The physicians flattered her that the Duke would be able to begin his journey in a fortnight. I shall be overjoyed to hear he has, as constant change of air and motion will restore his strength faster than anything. They hope to be in England in October.

I dined to day at Lady Cecilia's. She tells me the French Ambassador and Ambassadress are going to Nuneham. The poor Prince of Masserano, I doubt, is on the point of a longer journey. I will not, under pretence of a duty, be tiresome, though so great a pleasure to converse with you.

1663. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 24, 1777.

Not Apollo on his forked hill, nor *le Dieu Phœbus,* nor "full-blown Bufo," nor Lord Bute when he sat on the altar of the Treasury and inhaled clouds of Scotch incense—ay, and of English too—could be more proud than I am with having inspired your Ladyship with French verses: to be sure I should have returned them, if I was as thorough-paced a poetaster as Madame Pinto supposes. She came to see my house t'other day, and told me in Portug*hée*-French, that "*pou*tetre she detourned me from making des petits vers." I hate to have a scrap of reputation, and had rather anybody thought I could not write my name; unless all Dame Pintos had the simplicity of Balzac's neighbour, who assured him he had a profound respect for him and *messieurs ses*

[1] Now first published.—Cunningham.

Engraved by S. Freeman

MARY FITZPATRICK.

livres. I wonder how a real genius supports the absurd compliments he must meet with: I know, when they tumble down to my sphere, they make me sweat.

The Duke of Gloucester is risen from the dead. You may judge, Madam, how far gone he was, when all the letters were full of transports at his having sat up an hour! The Duchess tells me she has been out to take the air, after not stirring out of their apartment for seven weeks. In truth I was almost as much frightened about *her*, for, after writing to some of us constantly twice a week since the commencement of the Duke's illness, three posts arrived without a line from her. I had pain enough to stifle my own apprehensions and hush those of her poor daughters. Her own letter to me in the midst of her joy is the most moving I ever read. If the physicians did not confirm the accounts of his Royal Highness's great amendment, I should doubt that a flash of hope through such a gloom had elated their spirits too much. Probably a kind message from the King by Colonel Jennings wrought the miracle; but I must not omit a charming trait of a little girl in the house where they lodged. The Duke longed for potatoes. None were to be found. A messenger was sent twenty miles. The poor little soul hearing such a hubbub for potatoes, asked what sort of things they were. On their being described, she said not a word, but stole out to a convent where she had seen some, begged four, and brought them for the Duke, who ate them all eagerly, and desired more.

Infidels may think what they will, but I am convinced it was a cherub, and conclude it has never appeared since. The famous Council that sat at Trent would have given a thousand ducats for a glimpse of inspiration a quarter as big.

You ask what I meant by *the Dorset's self*,[1] &c.—alas! very little; only that Ampthill would miss the fair Vernons, though Lady Holland and Lady Louisa were there. To be sure, I might have used those very words, as well as a line from Prior that did not express my meaning. The truth is, that as I generally write in a hurry, and say anything that comes into my head, it may well be that nonsense is the first to present itself, and then it is sure to take its place forwards, as it would in a stage-coach. For the future, I beg your Ladyship will suppose that if I blotted my letters, they would be perfectly intelligible; but as I trust you have too much

[1] This quotation does not appear in the MSS. letters.—R. Vernon Smith. He was thinking of Addison—

"In numbers such as Dorset's self might use."—Cunningham.

taste not to prefer natural nonsense once in ten days to the sublime galimatias which one is composing for eight months in winter quarters, I shall go on in my old way, and not endeavour to take you by surprise after prodigious preparation.—Pray observe the art of this paragraph: it implies the conquest of Ticonderoga. If you had not been so dull about Dorset, I should not have explained it.

I firmly believe Mezerai is the best history of France; not because I have read it, but because I have not, and it is reckoned so. I don't always find that books answer their characters: my knowledge of everything is picked up from memoirs, novels, &c. I never dealt in substantial works; and though few simple gentlemen have read more, my memory is a chaos of aughts and ends, and fit for nobody's use but my own. How should I, Madam, recommend a course of reading, who hold learning very cheap, and only read for amusement, and never perused six pages of Scotch metaphysics in all my days?

I don't wonder Lord Ossory preferred Thoresby to the three old dukeries. So did I, and did not admire it much neither. Worksop is an artificial ugly forest of evergreens; Clumber aspires to the same merit, but is yet in leading-strings. Welbeck is in the other extremity, a devastation. The house is the delight of *my* eyes, for it is an hospital of old portraits. Merry Sherwood is a *trist* region, and wants a race of outlaws to enliven it, and as Duchess Robin-Hood[1] has run her country, it has little chance of recovering its ancient glory.

I think I shall step to Goodwood on Wednesday for a couple of days, if Tuesday's letters continue favourable. I had given up all thoughts of that journey; but the Conways and Mrs. Damer are going thither on their way to Mount-Edgcumbe, and have almost persuaded me—not to go to the Land's End—I have no such long holidays.

I heard to-day at Richmond that Julius Cæsar Burgonius's Commentaries are to be published in an extraordinary Gazette of three-and-twenty pages in folio, to-morrow—a counterpart to the Iliad in a nutshell! I hope we shall have a Louvre edition of King Buckingham's 'Ordinances on Etiquette.'

[1] That is, the Duchess of Kingston. The allusion is to Thoresby, the seat of the Duke of Kingston, at Thoresby, in Sherwood.—CUNNINGHAM.

1664. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 31, 1777.

You are very kind, dear Sir, in giving me an account of your health and occupations, and inquiring after mine. I am very sorry you are not as free from gout, as I have been ever since February; but I trust it will only keep you from other complaints, and never prevent your amusing yourself, which you are one of those few happy beings that can always do; and your temper is so good, and your mind so naturally philosophic, composed, and contented, that you neither want the world, care about it, nor are affected by anything that occurs in it. This is true wisdom, but wisdom which nothing can give but constitution. Detached amusements have always made a great part of my own delight, and have sown my life with some of its best moments. My intention was, that they should be the employments of my latter years, but fate seems to have chalked out a very different scene for me! The misfortune of my nephew has involved me in business, and consequently care, and opens a scene of disputes, with which I shall not molest your tranquillity.

The dangerous situation in which his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester has been, and out of which I doubt he is scarce yet emerged, though better, has added more thorns to my uneasy mind.[1]

[1] The following letter (now first printed) from the Duchess of Gloucester to her father, Sir Edward Walpole, relates entirely and touchingly to her marriage and the Duke's illness:—

TO SIR EDWARD WALPOLE, K.B.

Verona, June 20, 1777.

After the last letter you received from the Duke, in which he offered to go to England by himself, if thought necessary, it will appear very extraordinary to you that we are directly setting off for England *en famille*, without even waiting for your answer to that letter; an answer we might have had could posts be depended upon, but none is come, and the Duke is too ill to stay a day longer in Italy than can be helped. A broken heart cannot stand an Italian climate in the summer. He is so emaciated, and so changed, that Sophia said to him the other day, "Papa, you look like a dead man."

His fate has shown that it is the duty of princes to support their rank, for he has paid dearly for marrying beneath him! He was ill at Venice, but as I knew that is an unwholesome place, I would not say anything about it, hoping the air of Verona (which is as good as Italian air can be in the summer) would set him right again; but, on the contrary, he has grown so much worse every hour, that Bryant and I have prevailed upon him to set off for England on Tuesday, 24th. It is a long and heavy journey; but as each post carries us more northwards, and as the air will change every minute, I hope in God we shall get him to England, where the air may brace his nerves for the summer. He says that he will not stay the winter in London.

The Duchess's daughters are at Hampton-Court, and partly under my care. In one word, my whole summer has been engrossed by duties, which has confined me at home, without indulging myself in a single pursuit to my taste.

I cannot wonder at him: long as the journey is back to Rome, he had certainly better take it than bear the persecutions he meets with in England; and although travelling will of course eat up all our savings, it will only do that; and it will be better to spend our pittance in travelling, which agrees with the Duke, and which he can do suitable to his rank, than to spend it in England. The Duke is not the eldest brother; but that does not alter his blood; he is still royal, and must feel like a prince; therefore, at thirty-four, cannot bear to be treated as he is in his own country. The summers in England are wholesome, and there we have resources; but in the winter England is not bearable. I mention this now, although I hope to see you so soon, that you and my few friends may not be disappointed when you find we design to return to Rome in the winter. I say return; God in heaven grant that he may be able! I shall write constantly upon the road, so that your anxiety will be relieved every post; and as I know how shocking this suspense is, I would not write this letter to you, but that I know some excuse is necessary for all *that we do*, and the Duke does not like to be looked upon as capricious. I do not look upon him as *in immediate danger*, now he is going out of Italy; but it is right you should have some notice of his looks before you see him; for unless the journey works miracles, he will alarm you to see him even now. The posts here are cruel; he has flattered himself with a letter from you every day this week, and no post is come. I rather wish that none may come till we are set out, for he has not strength enough to bear any more shocks. The last letter you wrote him raised his spirits a little; he cannot bear their being any more depressed. It is lucky that I have so strong a constitution; but even mine would fail if we stayed in this enervating country, for I can scarcely hold up. I should have sunk long ago but for God's goodness, in whom I do put all my trust; and have found, ever since I was Duchess of Gloucester, the great comfort of religion. Will you be so good as to let Mr. Walpole[1] see this letter, for I cannot write any more upon the subject—it quite overcomes me; but I should wish him to know that we are not capricious. My poor boy[2] is not strong; I hope English air will set him up again; but he is greatly altered, and grown thin. I cannot bear to part with him, although he has little chance of ever having anything to live upon but a commission in the Austrian service.

If his poor father is ever to be made easy upon his and his sister's account, it must come soon;—even good news can come too late! Forgive me, my dear sir, for writing thus; but if you saw the Duke, you would not wonder at my being so wretched as I am,—for I am the cause of all! But, in whatever situation,

I shall remain your most dutiful though unhappy daughter,

MARIA.

Saturday, 21st.

The post is come in; but no letter from you. I have a letter from Horatia of June 3rd; but I have not spirits to answer it. I did hope the Duke would have been better to-day; but he is weaker. God knows if we shall be able to set off on Tuesday; but as this cannot go till to-morrow morning, I will not seal it till I can tell you how he is.

Sunday noon.

This letter will now be carried by an express, which I send for Drs. Jebbe and Adair,—although much I fear they will come too late! The Duke is so weak now

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[1] Her uncle, Horace Walpole—the Letter-Writer.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester. See p. 440.—CUNNINGHAM.

In short, as I have told you before, I often wish myself a monk at Cambridge. Writers on Government condemn, very properly, a recluse life, as contrary to Nature's interest, who loves procreation; but as Nature seems not very desirous that we should procreate to threescore years and ten, I think convents very suitable retreats for those whom our *Alma Mater* does not emphatically call to her *Opus Magnum*. And though, to be sure, grey hairs are fittest to conduct state affairs, yet as the Rehoboams of the world (Louis XVI. excepted) do not always trust the rudder of government to ancient hands, old gentlemen, methinks, are very ill-placed [when not at the council-board] anywhere but in a cloister. As I have no more vocation to the ministry than to carrying on my family, I sigh after a dormitory; and as in six weeks my clock will strike sixty, I wish I had nothing more to do with the world. I am not tired of living, but—what signifies sketching visions? One must take one's lot as it comes; bitter and sweet are poured into every cup. To-morrow may be pleasanter than to-day. Nothing lasts of one colour. One must embrace the cloister, or take the chances of the world as they present themselves; and since uninterrupted happiness would but embitter the certainty that even that must end, rubs and crosses should be softened by the same consideration. I am not so busied, but I shall be very glad of a sight of your manuscript, and will return it carefully. I will thank you, too, for the print of Mr. [Soame] Jenyns, which I have not, nor have seen. Adieu!

Yours most cordially.

1665. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 1, 1777.

The Duke [of Gloucester] is still struggling at Trent. Ten days ago the letters were suddenly and wonderfully mended, and we flattered ourselves the danger was quite over. The next post brought a little relapse, and great complaint of the heats. Two days ago we were a little comforted again. He had had two exceedingly

that we are going to begin our journey immediately, as change of air is our *only* hope. I see he thinks it over with him, although he endeavours to raise my hopes; but I have none. Thus will end this amiable young man—only for marrying a woman he loved! Then think what must be that woman's feelings at this instant. We hope to reach Alta to-night. God knows whether we shall ever move from thence. —Cunningham.

good nights; and having gained so much time, and the physicians no longer speaking despondingly, though they will not from prudence give too great hopes, we trust we shall again see his Royal Highness in England. The Duchess's distress has equalled anything we could figure. For three weeks she did not write a syllable, nor even saw Mrs. Heywood.[1] She tells Lady Laura, her daughter, that she did nothing but pray and weep. She has still much to go through. It is well her constitution and courage are so firm. It will be the end of October at soonest before they can be at home. When the Duke is able to travel, I shall expect great things from motion and change of air. The King has sent him a kind message: it will do more than twenty physicians, and I believe produced the amendment, for his heart was broken.

General Burgoyne has taken Ticonderoga, and given a new complexion to the aspect of affairs, which was very wan indeed. General Howe is gone with a great force some whither, and the moment is very critical. I don't pretend to form any judgment. Eleven months ago I thought America subdued; and a fortnight ago, it was as little likely to be subdued as ever. We, the people, know little of the truth. One would think the more informed were not more settled in their opinions: for General Howe's retreat, after advancing towards Washington, produced despair; the taking of one post has given confidence. So much fluctuation begets a thousand reports. It is now said at once, that we are to hire fifteen thousand Russians for next campaign, and that we are treating for peace by the mediation of France. If you ask me what I believe—nothing but what is past—and perhaps have not heard a quarter of that. In one thing alone all that come from America agree, that the alienation from this country is incredible and universal; so that, instead of obtaining a revenue thence, the pretence of the war, the conquest would only entail boundless expense to preserve it. The New World will at last be revenged on the Old.

My poor nephew remains in the same undecided state; sometimes furious, sometimes sullen. I prophesy no more about him than about America; but, one way or other, he will be a source of vexation to me. But one speaks, or ought to speak, with more indifference about future events, when the clock is going to strike sixty. Visions, and hopes, and prospects, are pretty playthings for

[1] One of the Women of the Bedchamber who attended the Duchess of Gloucester abroad.—WALPOLE.

boys. It is folly to vex one's self for what cannot last very long. Indeed, what can, even when one is young? Corydon firmly believes he shall be wretched for ever, if he does not marry Phillis. That misery can but last till she has lost her bloom. His eternal woe would vanish, if her nose grew red. How often do our griefs become our comforts! I know what I wish to-day; not at all what I shall wish to-morrow. Sixty says, You did not wish for *me*, yet you would like to keep me. Sixty is in the right; and I have not a word more to say.

1666. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 8, 1777, *late.*

I HAD written great part of a letter, Madam, by snatches, as my hopes or fears predominated, and with twenty nothings that came across me, as my spirits rose: now I shall send none of it, as the nonsense would be out of season, and the black scale preponderates. But I don't make myself understood. Well, Madam, we had no letters by Tuesday's mail, for the wind was contrary. Our uneasiness increased on Friday's mail too not arriving. On Sunday morning I received a letter from Paris, but could learn nothing from Trent. All yesterday my anxiety was extreme. It was not till late in the evening I learnt that the letters from Trent come by the Flemish post, and that two mails from Flanders were due; they are arrived and bring a very bad account indeed! Poor Lady Laura received a favourable letter from her mother of the 21st, but one of the 26th from the Duke's surgeon says his Royal Highness was relapsed, and so very bad, that it was thought he would be dead in four hours, though they should have some hopes if he did not go off by that time. I think he did weather that crisis, for no messenger is come; and had these letters arrived on Friday or Saturday, as they should have done, we should now be comforting ourselves on having gained three days without a messenger. I do not see why we may not equally presume, since the wind alone is the cause that we are alarmed so late. However, every relapse increases the peril, and the blow seems almost inevitable.

I have passed a most terrible evening amidst Lady Dysart and my poor girls: and I doubt it is only the beginning of sorrows—but you shall not be grieved with the details. I had, as I hope you think, answered your Ladyship's last in mine that I don't send, but at

present it is impossible to attend to anything but the distress in question: excuse me till I have a calmer moment. I must muster all the reason I have, when so many will want my assistance.

1667. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Wednesday night, late, Sept. 10, 1777.

It is presuming a great deal upon your Ladyship's and Lord Ossory's friendship to trouble you with my distresses: at least I ought to communicate any gleam of joy too. By a mistake, the servants at Gloucester House sent us word yesterday morning that another mail was arrived, but had not brought one letter from Trent. This seemed decisive! every moment we expected the fatal courier! I ran down to the gate every time the bell rang, from not being able to wait for the blow. All yesterday and to-day passed in this dreadful suspense. No messenger arriving, my hopes could not help rekindling: at six I went to Hampton Court to communicate my ray of hope to my poor nieces; at seven, Mr. Hiel, the Duke's chief servant here, brought us a letter of the 29th that has put life into us; the pain in the leg was diminished, his Royal Highness had drunk a glass of wine and had spoken articulately. In short, he had survived for three days, after they had thought he would not last four hours; but I think I have better founded hope. My brother and I both flattered ourselves that the pain and swelling in the leg, which had been thought so alarming, were a new crisis of the distemper, and the flux not being returned, confirmed that opinion. I know some years ago his terrible humour fell on his arm with a like swelling, and it was thought an amputation was necessary, but it soon went off. It will seem an age to Friday or Saturday, and the winds may be contrary again; but sufficient to the day is the evil thereof! Wait for the Echo—my good old friend has proved faithful, when I thought even she could not articulate. There is a good deal more for her to contradict, for *my* Echo, my oracle, never repeats what she hears, but the reverse. T'other Echo lives at Court, and always says *yes* with a broad Scotch accent. I must go to bed, for I am worn out. Good night, Madam.

1668. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 16, 1777.

I HAVE received your volume safely, dear Sir, and hurry to thank you before I have read a page, that you may be in no pain about its arrival. I will return it with the greatest care as soon as I have finished it; and at the same time will send Mr. Essex the bills, as I beg you will let him know. I have no less reason for writing immediately, to thank you for the great confidence you place in me. You talk of *nonsense;* alas! what are all our opinions else? if we search for truth before we fix our principles, what do we find but doubt? And which of us begins the search a *tabula rasa?* Nay, where can we hunt but in volumes of error or purposed delusion? Have not we, too, a bias in our minds—our passions? They will turn the scale in favour of the doctrines most agreeable to them. Yet let us be a little vain: you and I differ radically in our principles, and yet in forty years they have never cast a gloom over our friendship. We could give the world a reason that it would not like. We have both been sincere, have both been consistent, and neither adopted our principles nor have varied them for our interest.

Your labour, as far as I am acquainted with it, astonishes me: it shows what can be achieved by a man that does not lose a moment; and, which is still better, how happy the man is who can always employ himself. I do not believe that the proud prelate, who would not make you a little happier, is half so much to be envied. Thank you for the print of Soame Jenyns: it is a proof of Sir Joshua's art, who could give a strong resemblance of so uncouth a countenance, without leaving it disagreeable.

The Duke of Gloucester is miraculously revived. For two whole days I doubted whether he was not dead. I hope fatalists and omen-mongers will be confuted; and this, as his grandfather broke the charm of the second of the name being an unfortunate prince, the Duke will baffle that, which has made the title of Gloucester unpropitious. Adieu!

1669. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Tuesday evening, Sept. 16, 1777.

I HAVE got a delightful plaything, if I had time for play. It is a new sort of camera-obscura[1] for drawing the portraits of persons, or prospects, or insides of rooms, and does not depend on the sun or anything. The misfortune is, that there is a vast deal of machinery and putting together, and I am the worst person living for managing it. You know I am impenetrably dull in everything that requires a grain of common sense. The inventor is to come to me on Friday, and try if he can make me remember my right hand from my left. I could as soon have invented my machine as manage it; yet it has cost me ten guineas, and may cost me as much more as I please for improving it. You will conclude it was the dearness tempted me. I believe I must keep an astronomer, like Mr. Beauclerk, to help me play with my rattle. The inventor, who seems very modest and simple, but I conclude an able flatterer, was in love with my house, and vowed nothing ever suited his camera so well. To be sure, the painted windows and the prospects, and the Gothic chimneys, &c. &c., were the delights of one's eyes, when no bigger than a silver penny. *You* would know how to manage it, as if you had never done anything else. Had not you better come and see it? You will learn how to conduct it, with the pleasure of correcting my awkwardness and *unlearnability*. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West have each got one; and the Duke of Northumberland is so charmed with the invention, that I dare say he can talk upon and explain it till I should understand ten times less of the matter than I do. Remember, neither Lady Ailesbury, nor you, nor Mrs. Damer, have seen my new divine Closet, nor the billiard-sticks with which the Countess of Pembroke and Arcadia used to play with her brother Sir Philip;[2] nor the portrait of *la belle* Jennings in the State Bedchamber. I go to town this day s'ennight for a day or two; and as, *to be sure*, Mount Edgecumbe has put you out of humour with Park-place, you may deign to leave it for a moment. I never did see Cotchel,[3] and

[1] The machine called a Delineator.—WALPOLE.

[2] These billiard-sticks of ivory, with the bear and ragged staff engraved upon them, were sold at the Strawberry Hill sale in 1842 for the insignificant sum of 3*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* Would twenty guineas obtain them now?—CUNNINGHAM.

[3] The old residence of the family of Edgecumbe, twelve miles distant from Mount Edgecumbe.—WALPOLE.

am sorry. Is not the old wardrobe there still? There was one from the time of Cain; but Adam's breeches and Eve's underpetticoat were eaten by a goat in the ark. Good night!

1670. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1777.

I AM a little calm at present, and can tell what I say; which would not have been the case last week. The changes in the Duke of Gloucester's condition have been so frequent and so unexpected, that I have been buffeted with every opposite agitation. On Saturday was sevennight we heard that his Royal Highness was in a very fair way. On the next Monday we were advertised that he was not likely to last four hours. The next day the post was said to be arrived, and to have brought no letters from Trent. Fatal as this seemed, the arrival of no messenger left a gleam of hope; and next evening a favourable letter proved the mistake of the post having arrived sooner. Two more posts have brought more rapid accounts of amendment than one can scarce credit, if two circumstances did not solve the vast improbability. The humour had fallen on the lower parts, but with such violence as to bring on all the ordinary prognostics of immediate death; and the Duke swelled from his groin to his foot. This vent cleared the bowels, and, as the stamina are still more vigorous than the royal humour, they seem to have conquered. For the swiftness of the recovery, it is owing to a very different cause; to the removal of a malady which had co-operated with the disorder in the blood to bring on so violent and lasting an attack. In short, the King has sent his Royal Highness a most kind and brotherly letter, and the physicians are not to blame for not having prescribed a medicine that was not in their dispensary.

You may judge to what a skeleton such a conflict of body and mind, in bed for thirteen weeks, and in so sultry a climate, must have reduced the Duke. They could hear the bones, they say, rattle in his skin. They speak of the Duchess's distraction, and the change in her person and beauty, with as much energy. Well! may we but see them here again! I will add no more; I have curbed myself to say so little. But what a week, and what transitions! It would make a tragedy to paint, as I did to myself, the Duchess travelling with the body, which the Duke had exacted of her, and with two infants, one just old enough to lisp daggers, and

arriving in a succession of inns to be stared at, when she would wish herself in her grave; and returning to her own country to encounter mortification, triumph in her fall, and total uncertainty of her own fate, and of that of her children! It had been Agrippina again at Brundusium. No King ever had an opportunity of dispelling more woe, and his Majesty must taste the satisfaction he has given. It is the reverse of the tinsel, glory.

I know nothing else, and you cannot wonder that I have had room for nothing else. For above three weeks we have been totally in the dark about America. To tell you anything else would be repeating conjectures, which, though they fill up every cranny of the interstices of events, are most unsubstantial mortar, and rarely harden into part of the building.

You are too reasonable about your own lameness to want any exhortation to patience. I am very weak on my feet too; but always say, when asked, I am well enough. The absence of pain is the pleasure of age. I wish you a great-nephew, because one ought to cultivate visions: it is true, disappointment is not quite so airy, nor vanishes like the fumes which conjured it up. Pray don't imagine I am a philosopher but when I am pretty much at ease. Last week would give me the lie soundly, if I affected airs of stoicism. I pretend to nothing but to having chalked out for myself and pursued a plan of tranquillity; not because I had no passions, but because I knew the big ones, ambition and the chase of fortune, would produce more tempest in my passions than I could bear. The vexations my family have occasioned me were none of my seeking. I am neither so insensible as not to feel them, or not to try to remedy them. A little common sense is all the philosophy I possess; and, when the business of others does not torment me, nobody is more contented or can find more amusement than I. This place, my books and playthings, are empire enough for me; but, for amusing myself, I never was so totally debarred of that talent as this summer. I sigh to be my own master again; that is, idle. Adieu!

19*th*.

P.S. It is said a victualling-ship has brought an account of the Howes having attempted to cross the Delaware, in order to attack Philadelphia, and of Washington having marched and prevented them; and that on this disappointment they were sailed to Boston. On the other hand, the provincials are said to have abandoned Fort Edward. Few days will ascertain or contradict these events, and the papers will let you know.

A strange accident has happened. Lord Harcourt was missing the other day at dinner-time at his own seat, and at last was found suffocated in a well with his head downwards, and his dog upon him. It is concluded that the dog had fallen in, and that the Earl, in trying to extricate him, had lost his poise and tumbled in too. It is an odd exit for the Governor of a King, Ambassador, and Viceroy. Another Ambassador has had a sad fall too: Count Virry[1] is arrested at Susa, and ordered to present himself twice a day to the Governor. Madame[2] has leave to go where she pleases. Whither can she go? or how not stay with her husband? The Prince Masserano is set out, so ill, that I question if he will reach Calais.

1671. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 18, 1777.

You will not suspect my silence of idleness, I am but too apt to overwrite to any one, I have so perfect a friendship for. I only suppress my communicative disposition when I have nothing to say but what would grieve those that feel for me. The dangerous illness of the Duke of Gloucester, and the dreadful situation of my niece (and have not I another nephew besides!) have kept me in such agitation between hopes and despair, that I have had no peace or leisure. The present moment is very favourable; the prince has mended amazingly; he has had a most gracious letter from the King, and so I hope I shall be at liberty to be a mortal again, and not anxious about Princes.

This is not my immediate motive for writing, but to tell you an amazing piece of news that I have this moment received from town. The dinner-bell had rung—where? at Nuneham. The Earl [Lord Harcourt] did not appear. After much search, he was found standing on his head in a well, a dear little favourite dog upon his legs, his stick, and one of his gloves lying near. My letter does not say whether he had dropped the other. In short, I know no more.

[1] Count Virry was son of one of the same title, who had been the Sardinian minister in England, and was himself ambassador in France. While in England, in 1760, he married Miss Speed, niece of Lady Cobham.—WALPOLE.

[2] The Countess Virry, who was supposed to be the cause of her husband's disgrace, as very intriguing, and to have invited him to keep up a secret correspondence at Turin for making himself prime minister, which was discovered. Lord Shelburne, who was her friend, prevailed on the king to obtain their pardon of the King of Sardinia, in 1783; about which time she died suddenly. She was one of the heroines of Mr. Gray's "Long Story," and had a great deal of wit.—WALPOLE.

I will behave as well as I can on all national misfortunes, and so I proceed to tell you, with a proper degree of affliction, that a victualler has come in who reports that the loquacious Howes have miscarried in their attempt on Philadelphia, and are believed to be gone to Boston; that the provincials have abandoned Fort Edward, it is said; and that, I suppose, the silent, modest, humble General Burgoyne has not yet finished his concise description of the victorious manner in which he took possession of it, for said description is not yet arrived. *My* dinner-bell rings, and lest my servants should suspect an accident, I must finish. Did you receive the *Gazettes litteraires* which I left where you ordered a month ago?

1672. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 20, 1777.

THE Duchess's story is so interesting, Madam, that the sequel is as necessary as to a romance; but though I began it with warmth, the continuation will be told as coldly, as second parts by another hand. I am so apt to be hurried away by my first impressions, which is the mark of folly and a weak head, that I am determined never to know my own mind, till I have changed it. This may sound nonsense, but it contains a vast deal of meaning; the present solution of which is, that I shall simply relate facts, and leave their consequences to time.

The Duke's amendment has been most rapid—so rapid as to show that the humour in his blood was not the sole cause of his danger. As he began to grow better, he received a most gracious letter from the King, declaring his affection never had altered, never should. No wonder this revived his Royal Highness's spirits, and they advanced his recovery. The last letter from the surgeon his page says he by no means thinks the Duke yet out of danger. Others flattered themselves he would be able to begin his journey three days ago. I hope they will be in no hurry, nor move him till there is no risk of a relapse. We expect more letters to-day. It is a little your Ladyship's own fault, if I have talked too often on this subject.

The Howes have committed such another miscarriage, that for want of understanding it, great politicians conclude it is a *chef-d'œuvre* of finesse. The troops landed at Wilmington, on the high road to

Philadelphia, and then re-embarked; and are believed to be sailed to Boston. One thing at least they forgot, which is, that some achievement is necessary before the meeting of Parliament, and the time presses, for there is no living any longer upon Ticonderoga and declamations, though as the provincials have abandoned Fort Edward, no doubt there is another cargo of bombast upon the road. No honour is given to Washington from this second retreat, because it is not certain he had any share in it, and because if he had, he probably would not accept a red riband. The fact is certain, though and for, it comes from Scotland.

What a strange exit Lord Harcourt's! I am sorry for anybody's misfortune, though I cannot dislike to see Lord Nuneham earl: it is an addition to my concern for the poor father, as in all probability he perished by trying to save his dog. You know how that must touch *me*.

There has been a more dreadful accident to an inhabitant of Twickenham, and yet I am not very perfect in it. A son of Lord Hawke, who lodged here, returning from town at midnight on horseback, met a post-chaise that ran against him. The driver, trying to check his horses, elevated the pole, and it rushed full into Mr. Hawke's body, who died in an hour in great agonies. The mystery is, that he lived here with a woman to whom he is supposed to be privately married, and therefore went here by the name of Captain Smith. Not being known, his name (which name I don't know) was found in his hat, and they fetched the poor woman to him.

Have not I sent you here great food for an evening at a shooting-party, Madam? My Gazettes will take leave to repose till they have another crop: for if Lord Suffolk and Lord Holdernesse now get the long-contested Garters, it will not be worth putting you to the expense of three-pence.

1673. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 21, 1777.

This is but a codicil to my last, but I forgot to mention in it a new discovery that charms me more than Harlequin did at ten years old, and will bring all paradise before your eyes more perfectly than you can paint it to the good women of your parish. It will be the delight of your solitude, and will rival your own celestinette. It is such a perfecting of the camera obscura, that it no longer depends

on the sun, and serves for taking portraits with a force and exactness incredible; and serves almost as well by candlelight as by day. It is called *the delineator*, and is invented within these eighteen months by a Mr. Storer, a Norfolk man, one of the modestest and humblest of beings. Sir Joshua Reynolds and West are gone mad with it, and it will be their own faults if they do not excel Rubens in light and shade, and all the Flemish masters in truth. It improves the beauty of trees,—I don't know what it does not do—everything for me, for I can have every inside of every room here drawn minutely in the size of this page. Mr. Storer fell as much in love with Strawberry Hill as I did with his instrument. The perspectives of the house, which I studied so much, are miraculous in this camera. The Gallery, Cabinet, Round Drawing Room, and Great Bed Chamber, make such pictures as you never saw. The painted glass and trees that shade it are Arabian tales. This instrument will enable engravers to copy pictures with the utmost precision: and with it you may take a vase or the pattern of a china jar in a moment; architecture and trees are its greatest beauty; but I think it will perform more wonders than electricity, and yet it is so simple as to be contained in a trunk, that you may carry in your lap in your chaise, for there is such contrivance in that trunk that the filbert in the fairy tales which held such treasures was a fool to it. In short it is terrible to be threescore when it is just invented; I could play with it for forty years; when will you come up and see it? I am sure you will not go back without one.

I fear I was a little indelicate about Lord Harcourt's death, but I am so much more glad, when I am glad, than I can be sorry, when I am not, that I forgot the horror of the father's exit in my satisfaction at the son's succession; like the two universities, my congratulations to the reigning sovereign are much more hearty than my *luctus* for the departed one. I leave it to Lord Holdernesse and Lord Suffolk to pretend they are sorry that they have a competitor less for the Garter.

Are not you content with Lord Abingdon's pamphlet? are you not more? are you not glad he has so well puffed away Burke's sophistries? Who would have thought of this little David? I am sure I should not have been surprised if I had seen him knocking down a blackbird with a sling; my Lord's Grace of York will not be pleased.

As I am got far enough from the paragraph about Lord Harcourt, may I ask if you do not feel a little satisfaction in the idea of our

meeting at Nuneham? I am sorry I am threescore upon that account too; at that age one has not a vast many reasons for wishing to live long, but as loss of friends is the great bitter of old age, it is equally reasonable to like to enjoy their happiness. I am sure Lord Nuneham will have been exceedingly shocked; he is all good nature, and was an excellent son, and deserved a fonder father. I hear Mrs. Montagu made a high-flown penegyric two days ago, on the late Earl. The poor man had not an idea; but Bishop Hurd dined at the same place, and I suppose she thought it necessary for a muse to sing the praises of all Royal governors and preceptors. It was at Cambridge's; I was asked to dine there, but excused myself, for I have no pleasure in laughing at people, and am only weary when they are acting affected parts.

P.S. I recollect that they were the *Mémoires de Bachaumont* and not the *Gazettes Littéraires* that I sent you last: did you receive them?[1]

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Aston, Sept. 23, 1777.

One reason of my late silence was the alarming uncertainty which the papers constantly put me in concerning an account which I knew your tenderness for your relations deeply interested you about. Relations are not "those cordial drops," which, as somebody [Pope] says,

Heaven in our cup has thrown
To make the nauseous draught of life go down;

at least I don't find them so, no more than you yourself, for all my summer has been dawdled away in finding out the best way to be serviceable to a near one of my own, and I doubt without much effect.

I was once asked why I did not marry again. My answer was that I could not find a woman that had the qualifications of a certain female, whom the person who asked me knew. "The qualifications of her! why she is old, ugly, and a termagant into the bargain." "No matter for that! she was born in a boat, her mother was drowned, and she has no relation or country in the world,—those are the qualifications I require in the wife of my bosom;" and here endeth my chapter on the subject of relationship. I wish, at your leisure, you would sully a sheet or two of paper with giving me the birth, parentage, and education of General Burgoyne; at present I know little of him but as an orator; that consciousness of Christianity which he talks of in his proclamation in the very same breath that he threatens to give a stretch to his savage allies, makes me think that one might compose a good liturgy for the use of the King's friends, who, like the General, I trust, have the same consciousness of Christianity, and who like him can reconcile the scalping-knife with the Gospel. I am told that General Haldimand, now made Governor of Quebec, was the first person who laid a plan before Government for employing these Indians and that it was rejected. His promotion shows that government has had the grace to change its mind even if the Gazette had not told us so before. Pray were not the Spaniards as defensible in employing dogs against the Americans as we are—but I scorn the word we; I am not, I cannot submit to call myself an Englishman. What an inconsistent creature is man? Poor Lord Harcourt! I fear he was so good a courtier that he would not have hesitated a moment about giving his vote for scalping his brethren in Canada, and yet he dies in the

1674. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 22, 1777.

I RETURN you your manuscript, dear Sir, with a thousand thanks, and shall be impatient to hear that you receive it safe. It has

humane act of saving a dog from drowning. I received about a fortnight ago six volumes of *Mémoires Secrettes*, &c. for which I return you many thanks, and will take care to bring them back to you when I come to London, but as they laid long at Mr. Verelst's in St. James's Square, this will not be the way of any speedy conveyance to me, which I hoped it would. Lord Rockingham and his party are good Christians and can forgive their enemies, whatever other folks are. At York races they all dined at the Archbishop's public dinner, and gave for a reason that his Grace made them the first visit at their lodgings; so you may call them rogues, rascals, or what you please; only visit them afterwards, and they will be as merry as griggs with you. Seriously speaking, I hardly know a more ridiculous proceeding than this; their secession was hardly more so. Had they avoided this visit, his Grace's mitre would have set awkwardly upon him for life. As it is, he must write another sermon before he meets with that contempt which every true Whig ought to give him; but where is such a Whig to be found? I see an Unconnected Whig has published something; is it worth the reading? My paper is more than full, so

I remain, dear sir,
Yours most cordially,
W. MASON.

Aston, Sept. 24, 1777.

But what will it cost? Is it in a maker's hands? and can one have it down and know how to use it without being shown; not that I believe above half of what you tell me, for I have arguments *à priori* (which I learnt when I was at the University) to prove that it can't take likenesses or delineate the human figure, unless that figure undergo first the chemical process which Medusa was so much skilled in, and be converted into immoveable stone; but this is no disparagement to the instrument, but to the human figure, which ought not to have pulsation, and such other matters as will make it commit the crime of false drawing, whether it will or no; therefore I still long to see it, and would even give my Celestinette for it unseen, for my Celestinette is now above two years old.

I cannot say but I do feel the satisfaction you speak of about going to Nuneham, &c. &c. &c., and I have other satisfactions of a more patriotic nature, which though they signify nothing, as there is no such thing as patriotism in this our day, yet somehow or other they please one like the filbert in the fairy tales, if they are not quite so substantial as your Delineating trunk. What would I give to see it for half an hour? I am hardly got far enough from my paragraph of mortality to recur to the trunk, but no matter.

I have never yet seen my Lord Abingdon's pamphlet, except an extract in the newspaper about the Archbishop. I am not clear whether said Earl did not dine with the Archbishop at the reconciliatory dinner which I mentioned in my last. It would have been right to do so as a party man, in order to make the Archbishop's definition the more true, which I should think was the reason which weighed with the rest of them.

This being a codicil like yours requires no formal signature.

amused me much, and I admire Mr. Baker [1] for having been able to show so much sense on so dry a subject. I wish, as you say you have materials for it, that you would write his Life. He deserved it much more than most of those he has recorded. His book on the Deficiencies of Learning is most excellent, and far too little known. I admire his moderation, too, which was extraordinary in a man who had suffered so much for his principles. Yet they warped even him, for he rejects Bishop Burnet's character of Bishop Gunning in p. 200, and yet in the very next page, gives the same character of him. Burnet's words are, "he had a great confusion of things in his head, but could bring nothing into method:" pray compare this with p. 201. I see nothing in which they differ, except that Burnet does not talk so much of his comeliness as Mr. Baker.

I shall not commend *your* moderation, when you excuse such a man as Bishop Watson. Nor ought you to be angry with Burnet, but with the witnesses on whose evidence Watson was convicted. To tell you the truth, I am glad when such faults are found with Burnet; for it shows his enemies are not angry at his telling falsehoods, but the truth. Must not an historian say a bishop was convicted of simony, if he was? I will tell you what was said of Burnet's History, by one whose testimony you yourself will not dispute—at least you would not in anything else. That confessor said, "Damn him, he has told a great deal of truth, but where the devil did he learn it?" This was St. Atterbury's testimony.

I shall take the liberty of reproving you, too, dear Sir, for defending that abominable murderess Queen Christina—and how can you doubt her conversation with Burnet? you must know there are a thousand evidences of her laughing at the religion she embraced. If you approve her, I will allow you to condemn Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney. Well, as we shall never have the same heroes, we will not dispute about them, nor shall I find fault when you have given me so much entertainment: it would be very ungrateful, and I have a thousand obligations to you, and want to have more. I want to see more of your manuscripts: they are full of curiosities, and I love some of your heroes, too: I honour Bishop Fisher, and love Mr. Baker.

If I might choose, I should like to see your account of the persons educated at King's—but as you may have objections, I insist, if you have, that you make me no word of answer. It is, perhaps, im-

[1] Thomas Baker, the learned author of "Reflections on Learning;" born at Durham in 1656; died at Cambridge in 1740.—Wright.

pertinent to ask it, and silence will lay neither of us under any difficulty. I have no right to make such a request, nor do now, but on the foot of its proving totally indifferent to you. You will make me blame myself, if it should a moment distress you; and I am sure you are too good-natured to put me out of humour with myself, which your making no answer would not do.

I enclose my bills for Mr. Essex, and will trouble you to send them to him. I again thank you, and trust you will be as friendly free with me, as I have been with you: you know I am a brother monk in everything but religious and political opinions. I only laugh at the thirty-nine articles: but abhor Calvin as I do the Queen of Sweden, for he was as thorough an assassin. Yours ever.

P.S. As I have a great mind, and, indeed, ought, when I require it, to show moderation, and when I have not, ought to confess it, which I do, for I own I am not moderate on certain points; if you are busy yourself and will send me the materials, I will draw up the life of Mr. Baker; and, if you are not content with it, you shall burn it in Smithfield. In good truth, I revere conscientious martyrs, of all sects, communions, and parties—I heartily pity them, if they are weak men. When they are as sensible as Mr. Baker, I doubt my own understanding more than his. I know I have not his virtues, but should delight in doing justice to them; and, perhaps, from a man of a different party the testimony would be more to his honour. I do not call myself of different principles; because a man that thinks himself bound by his oath, can be a man of no principle if he violates it. I do not mean to deny but many men might think King James's breach of his oath a dispensation from theirs; but, if they did not think so, or did not think their duty to their country obliged them to renounce their King, I should never defend those who took the new oaths from interest.

1675. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 28, 1777.

I FLATTER myself my zeal will not appear too prompt in assuring your Lordship and Lady Harcourt of the part I take in your late terrible shock. I wished to express it the first moment, but trusted you both know me too well to doubt of what I felt for you. I still

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

write in pain lest I should be importunate, and beg you will not trouble yourself to answer me, as all I mean is to show that I never can be insensible to anything that affects you.

It may be some satisfaction to your Lordship to know that every letter brings better accounts of the Duke of Gloucester. I will answer for the Duchess, that she is too sensible of your Lordship's friendship not to share with me in all I have felt for you. I have the honour to be, with the greatest regard, &c.

1676. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 29, 1777.

I PROMISED to have nothing to say for some time, Madam, and have had nothing but the old resource of the weather. I must make *amende honorable* to our summers, for though they arrive *à la maccaroni* three months too late, they come in Eastern pomp and with southern gales, as if they were part of the riches we gather in India. I did not use to love September, with its betweenity of parched days and cold long evenings, but this has been all lustre and verdancy: I am sorry it is at its end.

The Howes are gone the Lord knows whither, and have carried the American war with them, so there is nothing to say on that head, which is a great drawback on correspondence in the *shooting* season. General Burgoyne has had but bad sport in the woods.

The Bishop of Exeter, my niece, and Miss Keppel have been with me for two or three days, and the Dysarts and Waldegraves have come to us all day, so I have been an old patriarch, as far as an uncle can be so. The weather and my young nieces made the gallery very splendid, for Miss Keppel is a glorious creature, and handsomer than any of her cousins.

I beg to know by the first courier whether Charles Fox is author of a copy of verses to Poverty, attributed to him in the 'Annual Register.' I never heard of them before.

I was in town on Tuesday, and bought a new pamphlet that pleases me exceedingly. It is called 'An unconnected Whig's Address to the Public.' It comprehends in a very short way the chief points in the American contest. The author seems a good deal more attached to the Marquis than he pretends to be, but there is a great deal of truth, and not the less for the contempt it expresses of that mulish cart-horse George Grenville.

This letter is all rags; but I cannot help it. I have really nothing to say, and, as every post confirms the Duke's amendment, my mind is easy; and when nothing is poured into it, nothing will come out of it. I own, there are a great many wheels within, but they stand still, like the waterworks at Versailles, if not set in motion on some particular occasion.

I know nothing of poor Mrs. Hawke, as I have seen none of our village this week. At first they said she was gone mad, and then I heard Lord Hawke had sent for her. I don't know if either is true.

The new Duke of Norfolk's son is to be called Earl of Surrey, not of Arundel. This is to my mind, though it will be a paltry Earl of Surrey. The old Duke has left everything with the title (except 3000*l.* a-year to Harry Howard, who probably will be Duke, and 2000*l.* a-year to Lord Stourton's son, a great nephew; and they were not Howard estates), and has tied up his drunken heir so that he cannot remove a picture. He has given him, too, a family estate in Norfolk, repurchased from Lord Petre. To Lady Smith, who lived with him twenty years, he gives a trumpery annuity of fourscore pounds a-year, as if she were his old coachman! I remember the present Lord Pomfret, when his mother thought she had paid all his debts and discovered still more, wrote to her that he could compare himself only to *Cerberus*, who, when one head was cut off, another sprung up in its room. This was a very new piece of mythology. The house of Howard is not a bit like the old story of Cerberus, alias the Hydra, for so many of their heads were cut off formerly that it looks as if they never would have a head worth wearing on their shoulders again.

1677. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 1, 1777.

To confer favours, Sir, is certainly not giving trouble: and had I the most constant occupation, I should contrive to find moments for reading your works. I have passed a most melancholy summer, from different distresses in my family; and though my nephew's situation and other avocations prevent my having but very little time for literary amusements, I did not mean to debar myself of the pleasure of hearing from my friends. Unfortunately, at present, it is impossible for me to profit of your kindness; not from my own

business, but from the absence of Mr. Garrick. He is gone into Staffordshire to marry a nephew, and thence will pass into Wales to superintend a play that is to be acted at Sir Watkin Williams's. I am even afraid I shall not be the first apprised of his return, as I possibly may remove to town in expectation of the Duchess of Gloucester, before he is at home again. I shall not neglect my own satisfaction; but mention this circumstance, that you may not suspect me of inattention, if I should not get sight of *your* tragedy so soon as I wish. I am, Sir, with great regard.

1678. TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Oct. 5, 1777.

You are exceedingly good, and I shall assuredly accept your proposal in the fullest sense, and to ensure Mrs. Damer, beg I may expect you on Saturday next the 11th. If Lord and Lady William Campbell will do me the honour of accompanying you, I shall be most happy to see them, and expect Miss Caroline.[1] Let me know about them, that the State Bedchamber may be aired.

My difficulties about removing from home arise from the consciousness of my own weakness. I make it a rule, as much as I can, to conform wherever I go. Though I am threescore to-day, I should not think that an age for giving everything up; but it is, for whatever one has not strength to perform. You, though not a vast deal younger, are as healthy and strong, thank God! as ever you was: and you cannot have ideas of the mortification of being stared at by strangers and servants, when one hobbles, or cannot do as others do. I delight in being with you, and the Richmonds, and those I love and know; but the crowds of young people, and Chichester folks, and officers, and strange servants, make me afraid of Goodwood, I own. My spirits are never low; but they seldom will last out the whole day; and though I dare to say I appear to many capricious, and different from the rest of the world, there is more reason in my behaviour than there seems. You know in London I seldom stir out in a morning, and always late; and it is because I want a great deal of rest. Exercise never did agree with me: and it is hard if I do not know myself by this time; and what has done so well with me will probably suit me best for the rest of my life.

[1] Miss Caroline Campbell, eldest daughter of Lord William Campbell.—WALPOLE.

It would be ridiculous to talk so much of myself, and to enter into such trifling details, but *you* are the person in the world that I wish to convince that I do not act merely from humour or ill-humour; though I confess at the same time that I want your *bonhommie*, and have a disposition not to care at all for people that I do not absolutely like. I could say a great deal more on this head, but it is not proper; though, when one has pretty much done with the world, I think with Lady Blandford, that one may indulge one's self in one's own whims and partialities in one's own house. I do not mean, still less to profess, retirement, because it is less ridiculous to go on with the world to the last, than to return to it; but in a quiet way it has long been my purpose to drop a great deal of it. Of all things I am farthest from not intending to come often to Park Place, whenever you have little company; and I had rather be with you in November than in July, because I am so totally unable to walk farther than a snail. I will never say any more on these subjects, because there may be as much affectation in being over old, as folly in being over young. My idea of age is, that one has nothing really to do but what one ought, and what is reasonable. All affectations are pretensions; and pretending to be anything one is not, cannot deceive when one is known, as everybody must be that has lived long. I do not mean that old folks may not have pleasures if they can; but then I think those pleasures are confined to being comfortable, and to enjoying the few friends one has not outlived. I am so fair as to own, that one's duties are not pleasures. I have given up a great deal of my time to nephews and nieces, even to some I can have little affection for. I do love my nieces, nay like them; but people above forty years younger are certainly not the society I should seek. They can only think and talk of what is, or is to come; I certainly am more disposed to think and talk of what is past: and the obligation of passing the end of a long life in sets of totally new company is more irksome to me than passing a great deal of my time, as I do, quite alone. Family love and pride make me interest myself about the young people of my own family—for the whole rest of the young world, they are as indifferent to me as puppets or black children. This is my creed, and a key to my whole conduct, and the more likely to remain my creed, as I think it is *raisonné*. If I could paint my opinions instead of writing them—and I don't know whether it would not make a new sort of alphabet—I should use different colours for different affections at different ages. When I speak of love, affection, friendship, taste, liking, I should draw them

rose colour, carmine, blue, green, yellow, for my contemporaries: for new comers, the first would be of no colour; the others, purple, brown, crimson, and changeable. Remember, one tells one's creed only to one's confessor, that is *sub sigillo*. I write to you as I think; to others as I must. Adieu!

1679. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 5, 1777.

THERE is nothing so unfortunate as to be a philosopher and a wise man, and a reasoner, and to know what can and cannot be done. If invention had not preceded demonstration, we should by this time have understood the whole system of the universe, but have thought it impossible to alter or improve anything in our world. This is my opinion, and you may confute it by argument if you please. I who have a sovereign contempt for Euclid, and Newton, and Locke, and admire nothing but original genius, and hold that everything will be found out at last, as flying, living for ever, &c., trust to none of my senses, having seen Jonas perform what I did not believe, when I saw, and heard Le Texier be a dozen persons at once. In short, it is a joke to say anything is impossible. The Delineator does perform wonders; and though from my own immachinality I can do little or nothing with it, which has abated something of my enthusiasm, you, who will be able to work wonders with it, are to blame to contest its possibilities. As I tell you I don't know how to manage it, you may swear I cannot describe or give directions for conducting it. It cost me ten guineas, and I believe they are thrown away, for in a twelvemonth it will certainly be brought to greater perfection. In one point you are very right, one must be as motionless as Lord Abercorn, or the least vibration of the features spoils the portrait. In good truth, though I stared like the mob at the witchery of this new instrument, yet if it had not been so mysteriously involved in a box, I am not sure it would have surprized me more than any reflection painted on a diminishing mirror. The child has had his plaything broken to see what it was made of, and is weary of it; however I think it will answer admirably for taking the insides of buildings, and near prospects, and statues, and vases, and be of great help to engravers, and it does serve without the sun.

Lord Harcourt has given away at least fifty thousand pounds to his daughter and younger son. I hold it very right not to heap all

on heirs apparent; and yet loving the new Earl, and not caring a straw for the brother and sister, my concern for the father is not at all augmented. I had too the same reason that you hint at for being glad our friend is in possession. He had told me his intentions for you, but not knowing whether he had mentioned them to you, I was trusty you see, and did not divulge them even to you,—but it was a charming thought, and I hope the well will not be stopped up.

You ask the history of Burgoyne the Pompous.[1] He is a natural son of Lord Bingley, who put him into the entail of the estate, but when young Lane came of age the entail was cut off. He ran away with the old Lord Derby's daughter, and has been a fortunate gamester. Junius was thought unjust, as he was never supposed to do more than play very well. I have heard him speak in Parliament, just as he writes; for all his speeches were written and laboured, and yet neither in them nor in his conversation, did he ever impress me with an idea of his having parts. He is however a very useful commander, for he feeds the Gazette and the public, while the Howes and the war are so dumb.

I have read the Unconnected Whig, and recommend him to you; he does not waste words like the unmerciful hero of the last paragraph. It is a short, clear, strong picture of our present situation and its causes. I see no fault in it, but its favour for the Rockinghams, the most timid set of time-serving triflers that ever existed; why should not he dine with his Grace? Do not all Lord Rockingham's politics begin and end with dinners? Is not decency their whole wisdom? when they shunned Wilkes, could they avoid the Archbishop? I would lay a wager that if a parcel of schoolboys were to play at politicians, the children that should take the part of the opposition, would discover more spirit and sense. The cruellest thing that has been said of the Americans by the Court, is, that they were encouraged by the Opposition. You might as soon light a fire with a wet dish-clout. Adieu.[2]

[1] John Burgoyne, a general officer in the English army, a man of fashion and wit: author of "The Heiress," a comedy, and a contributor to "The Rolliad." He died 4th June, 1792, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.—CUNNINGHAM.

[2] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Nuneham, Oct. 22, 1777.

HERE am I, with the Isis before me drawing its line of silver through the greenest meadow in the world; a glorious wood to my left, and another glorious wood to my right; Abingdon spire there, Radcliff library there, &c. &c. &c. &c. Yet here am I without my Delineator: oh! that you would lend me yours! I would pawn my machinality upon it, that I could put it together without any directions; yet if there

1680. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1777.

I WILL never believe in impulses more; no, for I tore open the sacred box with as much impatience and as little reverence as Lady Barrymore could have done if she expected a new coiffeur from Paris. No holy frisson, no involuntary tear warned me that there was but a piece of paper between my sacrilegious fingers and the most precious relics in the world. Alas! Why am not I a Gregory or a Boniface, and possess treasures enough to found a Casa Santa over the invaluable offering your Lordship has sent me. You enriched my museum before; you have now enriched me, for who is not rich, who possesses what the world cannot buy? You have done more, my Lord; you have given me a talisman that will for ever keep off Macpherson and evil spirits from entering my dwelling; you have shown generosity, too, in the highest sense, for you have given me what I know you value so much. I have seriously kissed each spur devoutly, and think them more lovely than Cellini's Bell. You could have bestowed your bounty on no man living who could worship it more, nor is there any man living whom I should not envy the possession except General Washington. If he *gains his spurs* I think I could cede them. Thanks are poor, words could ill express my gratitude. The muse of the Dispensary would alone be capable of doing justice to your Lordship as she did to the Hero who wore these inestimable trophies.

be printed directions in the trunk, so much the better; and then as to the trunk, I would take as much care of it as King James the Second of humane memory did of his, when he was about to be shipwrecked, and I would bring it safe to you back in less than a fortnight, with the *Mémoires Secrettes*, which your charity blest my solitariness with at Aston. And I will give you the heel-piece of one of the Royal martyr's boots which he lost before the gates of Hull (the place of my nativity), and which has been laid up in lavender in our family ever since. And, as the Oxford coach goes the Henley road through Brentford every day, there is no doubt but the trunk would arrive here with the utmost safety. But I will say no more on the subject; only, that if what I have said, and what I have promised, is not enough to move your compassion, you must be as obstinate and mulish as

A King's favourite, or as a * [King].

My Lord Harcourt, who will be my surety for the safety of the said trunk, sends his best compliments and thanks for your agreeable letter. I am, whether you grant my petition or not,

Your most faithful and obliged servant,
W. MASON.

[1] Now first published. The spurs were those worn by William III. at the Battle of the Boyne. At the Strawberry Hill sale, in 1842, they sold for 13*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*—CUNNINGHAM.

One grief mixes with my transports. How could Ireland suffer the removal of her Palladium? does she not expect a host of toads, locusts, Scots, and every venomous insect in swarms on her coast? or is it not a mark of her degeneracy?

> To some new clime, or far more distant sky,
> O friendless and forsaken Virtue fly!

Do not expect, my Lord, that I should talk but poetry and enthusiasm. What day ever secured so much felicity, prevented so much mischief, as that festival on which these spurs were worn? Allowing credibility to legends, and sanctity to relics, what was the merit of martyrs but to themselves, what obligation was it to the world that they did not like to go to the devil? and why should we hoard up their teeth or their bones against the resurrection, when they would know where to find them wherever they were? In short Saint William is my patron, his spurs are the dearest treasure of my museum, and your Lordship's letter shall never, while I have breath, be separated from them; yet obliged as I am, I shall think your Lordship and Lady Harcourt heretics if you do not both, at least once a-year, make a pilgrimage to kiss the spurs. How can I say how much I am, &c.

P.S. Your Lordship's letter is dated Sunday, yet I received it only to-night, Wednesday.

1681. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 8, 1777.

Write to Sir George about my own writings!—sure, Madam, you do not think I would for the world! What in the name of fortune could I write but affectation and false modesty?—and then he writes again, and is more civil; and I then protest I cannot spell my own name; and then—and then, I am in for a new correspondence. I beg to be excused.

I have time to write to nobody but on business, or to a few that are used to my ways, and with whom I don't mind whether I stand on my head or my heels. I beg your honour's pardon, for you are one to whom I can write comfortably, though I know you keep my letters; and it is, I must say, no small merit or courage that I still continue to write to you, without having the fear of sense before my

eyes; but since neither Aristotle nor Bossu have laid down rules for letters, and consequently have left them to their native wildness, I shall persist in saying whatever comes uppermost, and the less I am understood by anybody but the person I write to, so much the better. St. Paul is my model for letter-writing, who being a man of fashion, and very unaffected, never studies for what he shall say, but in one paragraph takes care of Timothy's soul, and in the next of his own cloak.

However, though I will not engage with him in person, I must beg your good Ladyship to assure Sir George, I mean Lord Macartney, how very sensible I am of his partiality to me; which at least I will never forfeit, for you may safely take your Bible oath to him that I have entirely forsworn being an author. "*Quod scripsi, scripsi;*" and the things must shift for themselves; but the clock has struck threescore; and if I have not written very foolishly, I will take care that I will not. My outward man is so weak and shattered, that in all probability the inward has its share in the *délabrement;* but as of that I can be no judge myself, and as I am sure nobody will tell me, it is rather wiser not to risk exposing myself. The Catalogue of my collection will be no more worth reading than one of Christie's auction-books, and the prints are not yet half finished. Lord Macartney shall have one as soon as any man; he has always been kind to me; I have a very sincere regard for him; and particularly for his infinite goodnature, which I value in him, and in anybody, more than their parts. I rejoice in his good fortune, especially as it is due to his amiable qualities, for what is so glorious as to have the governed reward their governor! The gratitude of a whole people is the noblest of all epitaphs.

As your Ladyship is so punctual in answering my questions, it is not seemly that I should be less exact. Nay, I shall imitate you so servilely, that my answers will be individually the same as yours—*I don't know.* I neither know whether Lord Harcourt's dog broke its heart, nor whether their Royal Highnesses of Cumberland are going to part. The French mystery that you say is not tellable, I suppose implies that his Majesty's first surgeon has had a hand in the future dauphin. Truly, I thought that any indecency relative to divinity or government might be told, if accompanied with proper gravity. I have heard the late Lord Lyttelton discuss points of midwifery with the solemnity of a Solon. I don't mean that I am curious for the particulars. Louis XIII. was made to believe that he had begotten two sons, though he never knew how; and if his

successor has been persuaded that the talisman is removed, I have no doubt but the Queen will convince him that she is as fruitful, as the good of the monarchy requires. *En attendant*, and with all due respect for Lady Clermont's *intelligence*, I have little faith in conceptions that have been so long immaculate.

You ask when will American news come? A cargo is come, and if you are a sound courtier, Madam, you will believe every tittle, though it comes from Margate, which is not exactly the side of our island nearest to America. What is more strange, is, that though every one of our generals has gained a separate victory, every one of them is too modest to have sent any account of it. However, one captain of a sloop happened to be at the very point and moment of intelligence when all the accounts arrived at New York. In London, I hear, there are very contradictory letters. I am assured too that an officer is arrived, but the Gazette was so afflicted for the Margravine Dowager of Bareith, that it forgot to let us know what he says. In fine, it is believed that General Howe was on his march to Philadelphia; all the rest is thought to be hartshorn for the Stocks and the lottery tickets. Don't you begin to think, Madam, that it is pleasanter to read history than to live it? Battles are fought, and towns taken in every page, but a campaign takes six or seven months to hear, and achieves no great matter at last. I dare to say Alexander seemed to the coffee-houses of Pella a monstrous while about conquering the world. As to this American war, I am persuaded it will last to the end of the century; and then it is so inconvenient to have all letters come by the post of the ocean! People should never go to war above ten miles off, as the Grecian States used to do. Then one might have a Gazette every morning at breakfast. I hope Bengal will not rebel in my time, for then one shall be eighteen months between hearing that the army has taken the field and is gone into winter-quarters.

My nephew, George Cholmondeley (for I am uncle to all the world), dined here to-day, and repeated part of a very good copy of verses from Sheridan to Mrs. Crewe.[1] Has your Ladyship seen them? I trust they will not long retain their MS.-hood.

[1] The "Portrait"—presenting the 'School for Scandal' to Mrs. Crewe, a great beauty, and celebrated as Amoret in a copy of verses by Mr. Fox, printed at Strawberry Hill.—CUNNINGHAM.

1682. TO ROBERT JEPHSON, ESQ.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 17, 1777.

Mr. Garrick returned but two days ago, Sir, and I did not receive your tragedy ['The Law of Lombardy'] till this morning; so I could only read it once very rapidly and without any proper attention to particular passages; though, even so, some struck me as very fine.

You have encouraged me rather to criticise than flatter you; and you are in the right, for you have even profited of so weak a judgment as mine, and always improved the passages I objected to. Indeed, this is not quite a fair return, as it was inverting my method, by flattering, instead of finding fault with me; and a critic that meets with submission, is apt to grow vain, and insolent, and capricious. Still as I am persuaded that all criticisms, though erroneous, *before* an author appeals to the public, are friendly, I will fairly tell you what parts of your tragedy have struck me as objectionable on so superficial a perusal.

In general, the language appears to me too metaphoric; especially as used by all the characters. You seem to me to have imitated Beaumont and Fletcher, though your play is superior to all theirs. In truth, I think the diction is sometimes obscure from being so figurative, especially in the first act. Will you allow me to mention two instances?

> And craven Sloth, moulting his sleekless plumes,
> Nods drowsy wonder at th'adventurous wing
> That soars the shining azure o'er his head.

I own I do not understand why Sloth's plumes are sleekless; and I think that nodding wonder, and soaring azure, are expressions too Greek to be so close together, and too poetic for dialogue. The other passage is—

> The wise should watch th' event on Fortune's wheel,

and the seven following lines. The images are very fine, but demand more attention than common audiences are capable of. In 'Braganza' every image is strikingly clear.

I am afraid I am not quite satisfied with the conduct of your piece. Bireno's conduct on the attack on the princess seems too precipitate,

and not managed. It is still more incredible, that Paladore should confess his passion to his rival; and not less so, that a private man and a stranger should doubt the princess's faith, when she had preferred him to his rival, a prince of the blood and her destined husband; and that without the smallest inquiry he should believe Bireno was admitted privately to her apartment, when on her not rejecting him, he might have access to her openly. One cannot conceive her meaning in offending her father by refusing so proper a match, and intriguing with the very man she was to marry, and whom she had refused. Paladore's credulity is not of a piece with the account given of his wisdom, which had made him admitted to the king's counsels.

I think, when you bestow Sophia on Paladore, you forget that the king had declared he was obliged to give his daughter to a prince of his own blood; nor do I see any reason for Bireno's stabbing Ascanio, who was sure of being put to death when their treachery was discovered.

The character of the princess is very noble and well sustained. When I said I did not conceive her meaning, I expressed myself ill. I did not suppose she did intrigue with Bireno; but I meant that it was not natural Paladore should suspect she did, since it is inconceivable that a princess should refuse her cousin in marriage for the mere caprice of intriguing with him. Had she managed her father, and, from dread of his anger, temporized about Bireno, Paladore would have had more reason to doubt her. Would it not too be more natural for Bireno to incense the king against Paladore, than to endeavour to make the latter jealous of Sophia? At least, I think Bireno would have more chance of poisoning Paladore's mind, if he did not discover to him that he knew of his passion. Forgive me, Sir, but I cannot reconcile to probability Paladore's believing that Sophia had rejected Bireno for a husband, though it would please her father, and yet chose to intrigue with him in defiance of so serious and extraordinary a law. Either his credulity or his jealousy reduce Paladore to a lover very unworthy of such a woman as Sophia. For her sake I wish to see him more deserving of her.

You are so great a poet, Sir, that you have no occasion to labour anything but your plots. You can express anything you please. If the conduct is natural, you will not want words. Nay, I rather fear your indulging your poetic vein too far, for your language is sometimes sublime enough for odes, which admit the height of

enthusiasm, which Horace will not allow to tragic writers. You could set up twenty of our tragic authors with lines that you could afford to reject, though for no reason but their being too fine, as in landscape-painting some parts must be under-coloured to give the higher relief to the rest. Will you not think me too difficult and squeamish, when I find the language of "The Law of Lombardy" too rich?

I beg your pardon, but it is more difficult for you to please me, than anybody. I interest myself in your success and your glory. You must be perfect in all parts, in nature, simplicity, and character, as well as in the most charming poetry, or I shall not be content. If I dared, I would beg you to trust me with your plots, before you write a line. When a subject seizes you, your impetuosity cannot breathe till you have executed your plan. You must be curbed, as other poets want to be spurred. When your sketch is made, you must study the characters and the audience. It is not flattering *you* to say, that the least you have to do, is to write your play.

1683. TO THE EARL OF HARCOURT.[1]

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 18, 1777.

I AM sensibly obliged, my dear Lord, by your great goodness, and am most disposed to take the gardener you recommend, if I can. You are so good-natured you will not blame my suspense. I have a gardener that has lived with me above five-and-twenty years; he is incredibly ignorant, and a mule. When I wrote to your Lordship, my patience was worn out, and I resolved at least to have a gardener for flowers. On your not being able to give me one, I half consented to keep my own; not on his amendment, but because he will not leave me, presuming on my long suffering. I have offered him fifteen pounds a year to leave me, and when he pleads that he is old, and that nobody else will take him, I plead that I am old too, and that it is rather hard that I am not to have a few flowers, or a little fruit as long as I live. I shall now try if I can make any compromise with him, for I own I cannot bear to turn him adrift, nor will starve an old servant, though never a good one, to please my nose and mouth. Besides, he is a Scot, and I will not be unjust, even to that odious nation; and the more I dislike him, the less will

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

I allow my partiality to persuade me I am in the right. Every body would not understand this, and the Scotch none of them; but I am sure your Lordship will, and will not be angry that I dally with you. I know how strong my prejudices are, and am always afraid of them. As long as they only hate they are welcome, but prejudices are themselves so much Scots, that I must not let them be my *friends* and govern me. I will take the liberty of letting you know, if I can persuade the Serpent that has reduced my little Eden to be as nasty and barren as the Highlands, to take a pension and a yellow ribbon.

Lady Harcourt or your Lordship may frisk or vagary anywhere separately: I shall not be alarmed, nor think it by choice. Nay, if it were, where could I either mend yourself? I have so high an opinion of Miss Fauquiere, that, with all her regard for your Lordship, I believe you are the last man from whom she would bear to hear a gallantry. So you see, my Lord, how awkwardly you set about mischief. It is plain you are a novice, and have no talent for it, and therefore I advise you as a friend, not to attempt what would not become you: you are like a young tragic author, that meaning to draw a politic villain, makes him so very wicked, and lay such gross traps, that they would not catch an elephant. One laughs at his tragedy, but loves his heart. I am sure Miss Fauquiere agrees with me in desiring to remain the confidants of the two perfect characters of the drama.

Your Lordship's most devoted

HOR. WALPOLE.

1684. TO THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

Strawberry Hill, Oct. 19, 1777.

I THANK you much, dear Sir, for the sight of the book, which I return by Mr. Essex. It is not new to me that Burnet paid his court on the other side in the former part of his life; nor will I insist that he changed on conviction, which might be said, and generally is, for all converts, even those who shift their principles most glaringly from interest. Duke Lauderdale, indeed, was such a dog, that the least honest man must have been driven to detest him, however connected with him. I doubt Burnet could not be blind to his character, when he wrote the dedication. In truth, I have given up many of my saints, but not on the accusations of such wretches

as Dalrymple[1] and Macpherson,[2] nor can men so much their opposites, shake my faith in Lord Russell or Algernon Sydney. I do not relinquish those that sealed their integrity with their blood, but such as have taken thirty pieces of silver.

I was sorry you said we had any variance. We have differed in sentiments, but not in friendship. Two men, however unlike in principles, may be perfect friends, when both are sincere in their opinions as we are. Much less shall we quarrel about those of our separate parties, since very few on either side have been so invariably consistent as you and I have been; and therefore we are more sure of each other's integrity, than that of men whom we know less and who did vary from themselves. As you and I are only speculative persons, and no actors, it would be very idle to squabble about those that do not exist. In short, we are, I trust, in as perfect good humour with each other as we have been these forty years.

Pray do not hurry yourself about the anecdotes of Mr. Baker, nor neglect other occupations on that account. I shall certainly not have time to do anything this year. I expect the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in a very few days, must go to town as soon as they arrive, and shall probably have not much idle leisure before next summer.

It is not very discreet to look even so far forward, nor am I apt any longer to lay distant plans. A little sedentary literary amusement is indeed no very lofty castle in the air, if I do lay the foundation in idea seven or eight months beforehand.

Whatever manuscripts you lend me, I shall be very grateful for. They entertain me exceedingly, and I promise you we will not have the shadow of an argument about them. I do not love disputation, even with those most indifferent to me. *Your* pardon I most sincerely beg for having contested a single point with you. I am sure it was not with a grain of ill-humour towards you: on the contrary, it was from wishing at that moment that you did not approve though I disliked—but even that I give up as unreasonable.

You are in the right, dear Sir, not to apply to Masters for any papers he may have relating to Mr. Baker.[3] It is a trumpery

[1] Sir John Dalrymple, author of "Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland." Edinburgh, 1771-1773-1788; 3 vols., 4to.—WRIGHT.

[2] James Macpherson, the editor of Ossian, published a "History of Great Britain, from the Restoration in 1660 to the Accession of the House of Hanover, 1775," 2 vols., 4to.; and also "An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland." London, 4to., 1771.—WRIGHT.

[3] The papers which Masters possessed he himself eventually published, in 1784

fellow, from whom one would rather receive a refusal than an obligation.

I am sorry to hear Mr. Lort has the gout, and still more concerned that you still suffer from it. Such patience and temper as yours are the only palliatives. As the bootikins have so much abridged and softened my fits, I do not expect their return with the alarm and horror I used to do, and that is being cured of one half the complaints. I had scarce any pain last time, and did not keep my bed a day, and had no gout at all in either foot. May not I ask you if this is not some merit in the bootikins? To have cured me of my apprehensions is to me a vast deal, for now the intervals do not connect the fits. You will understand that I mean to speak a word to you in favour of the bootikins, for can one feel benefit, and not wish to impart it to a suffering friend? Indeed I am yours most sincerely.

1685. TO LORD NUNEHAM.[1]

Nov. 26, 1777.

I AM quite ashamed, my dear Lord, to receive such a mark of your Lordship's too kind partiality, in consulting my judgment rather than your own; nor have I any other way of answering it than by preferring your honour to my own prejudices, as I did, when I presumed to think that, had *they* sent, you ought to have gone to Court. It is very vexatious to pay eighty guineas for a daub; but as I know your scrupulous punctuality in performing your duties, permit me to say that I think your regard for the person that bespoke the picture should preponderate; and that even paying for it, and then giving it away, distinguishes between your respect for your father, and your sensibility to the neglect shown to his memory.

May I add that there may even be in two or three years, *two* reasons to *one* for your keeping the picture? Your Lordship must have heard a saying of your great grandfather, that had much wit in it—that grandfathers should love their grandsons, as the latter revenge their quarrel by wishing their fathers dead—do not *sons* then punish parents?

under the title of 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Baker, from the Papers of Dr. Zachary Grey: with a Catalogue of his Manuscript Collections. By R. Masters.'—WRIGHT.

[1] Now first published.—CUNNINGHAM.

I wish you as rich as Crœsus, my dear Lord, but impatient as I am to see you call out all the beauties of Nuneham, I had rather see you dig in your own garden than not have you a *Harcourt sans réproche;* I mean that even Dr. Hunter should not be able to invent a blemish that would stick. The poor lady you couple with him can only repeat, not invent. My greatest ambition is to admire you, and prove myself, my good Lord,

Your Lordship's most sincere friend and devoted servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

1686. TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

Arlington Street, Oct. 24, 1777.

YOUR letter's date made it still more welcome than their predecessors. I wish myself with you without envy, and think of Nuneham with more pleasure than I dare tell Lord Harcourt. I am delighted too with the prospect of seeing you so soon. My letter's date tells you why I do not instantly obey you. I am here and must be so some days, and the Delineator is locked up at Strawberry, or I hope you do not think I am so selfish as to prefer a plaything to your amusement. I will send it the moment I return merely to satisfy you, for Mr. Storer has already improved his idea so much, as to obviate I believe most of your objections. He is making me another, and honestly offered me to change it for me—and he has made a stand to it too, that remedies many inconveniences; but that I have not got yet, nor just now can I attend but to the present occupation.

The Duke and Duchess arrived yesterday. His R. H. is and looks better than I expected, not pulled though pale; his leg is still swelled and he is lame, but it has not opened; and his voice is strong and spirits good. The Duchess looks in health, but is much leaner and looks older. I have not seen them a moment alone, for they have not been a moment alone; all I know is, the Duke has written to ask when. The answer was not come half an hour ago. It is decent I should stay two or three days; and then if I was great enough to be proud of lowering myself, I should say, I shall return to my plough. No, nor am I one of those, who, though so great, ought to be sent to plough.

I am much obliged to you for your offering, yet though I like the occasion of its becoming a relic, I cannot accept it. Lord Harcourt

has given me the glorious and immortal spurs of King William; can I receive his uncle's boot-heel into the same sanctuary! when you want to be a Cardinal, you shall present it to his Grace of York, or to any of the *et ceteras* that you do not see from Nuneham.

Pray tell Lord and Lady Harcourt that I have been a perfect courtier for them, and said every thing in the world, and am commanded to return every thing in the world. I was impatient lest all England, and still more, all Scotland, should be beforehand with me in addresses; one Englishman offered one this very morning—*mais attendez moi sous l'orme.* There we shall talk more at our ease.[1]

1687. TO SIR HORACE MANN.

Arlington Street, Oct. 26, 1777.

It is past my usual period of writing to you; which would not have happened but from an uncommon, and indeed, considering the moment, an extraordinary dearth of matter. I could have done nothing but describe suspense, and every newspaper told you that. Still we know nothing certain of the state of affairs in America; the very existence where, of the Howes, is a mystery. The General is said to have beaten Washington, Clinton to have repulsed three

[1] TO THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE.

Nuneham, the day after his Majesty's happy accession, 1777.

Lord Harcourt has fancied my presence so necessary towards completing some alterations he has made on his terrace, that I have not been able to persuade him to let me leave this place before next Wednesday or Thursday, when I am obliged to go to town before I can visit Strawberry Hill, on business which I will tell you when I have the honour to see you, which I hope will be very soon. In the meantime, if anything calls you to town, I am to be found at my good host's in Curzon street, as usual.

I am charmed with the fair bearer of this note. I wish I was a Petrarch, that I might fall in love with her; and why not, without being a Petrarch? for 'tis surely more natural for an old widower to fall in love with a young maid, than for a young bachelor to be enamoured with an old married woman who had borne as many children as our gracious Queen Charlotte, which I think was that poet's case. Yet putting love out of the question, I may surely in all reason admire a beauty that can only be exceeded by its accompaniments of good nature, affability, and modest simplicity. I would call it innocence were it not too unfashionable a thing, and what I believe no young lady so advanced in years as she is (for I suspect she is almost seventeen), can possibly be suspected of. Certain it is, we have a brace of very accomplished ladies now in the house, who seem to have got rid of all that long before they came to her years of discretion; but I only say *seem*, for I would not speak with precision on such a delicate subject for the world.

Breakfast will permit me to add no more at present than that I am, dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

W. Mason.

attacks, and Burgoyne to be beaten. The second alone is credited. Impatience is very high, and uneasiness increases with every day. There is no sanguine face anywhere, but many alarmed ones. The pains taken, by circulating false reports, to keep up some confidence, only increase the dissatisfaction by disappointing. Some advantage gained may put off clamour for some months: but I think, the longer it is suspended, the more terrible it will be; and how the war should end but in ruin, I am not wise enough to conjecture. France suspends the blow, to make it more inevitable. She has suffered us to undo ourselves: will she allow us time to recover? We have begged her indulgence in the first: will she grant the second prayer?

The Duke of Gloucester is arrived. *That* is miraculous. He is almost well, and *that* is less surprising. Mr. James finds his face plumper than at Rome: he is certainly not leaner, nor yellow, though very pale; and his voice shows that his lungs are good. In short, the remainder of his illness is in his right leg; which is still swelled, and very lame when he stands too much, as he is too apt to do. The Duchess has more symptoms of what she has suffered than his Royal Highness; and as she is much fallen away, and even shrunk, her face looks much older, which must necessarily happen till her skin fills up again. The Princess Sophia is a fine child, though less pretty than she was. The Prince a pretty boy. If there is anything more to tell you, it is yet to come.

You have heard of the inundation at Petersburgh. That ill wind produced luck to somebody. As the Empress had not distressed objects enough among her own people to gratify her humanity, she turned the torrent of her bounty towards that unhappy relict the Duchess of Kingston, and ordered her Admiralty to take particular care of the marvellous yacht that bore Messalina and her fortune. Pray mind that I bestow the latter Empress's name on the Duchess, only because she married a second husband in the lifetime of the first. Amongst other benevolences, the Czarina lent her Grace a courier to despatch to England—I suppose to acquaint Lord Bristol that he is not a widower. That courier brought a letter from a friend to Dr. Hunter, with the following anecdote. Her Imperial Majesty proposed to her brother of China to lay waste a large district that separates their two empires, lest it should, as it has been on the point of doing, produce war between them; the two empires being at the two extremities of the world, not being distance enough to keep the peace. The ill-bred Tartar sent no answer to so humane

a project. On the contrary, he dispersed a letter to the Russian people, in which he tells them that a woman—he might have said the Minerva of the French literati—had proposed to him to extirpate all the inhabitants of a certain region belonging to him, but that he knew better what to do with his own country: however, he could but wonder that the people of all the Russias should still submit to be governed by a creature that had assassinated her husband.—Oh! if she had pulled the Ottoman by the nose in the midst of Constantinople, as she intended to do, this savage would have been more civilised. I doubt the same rude Monarch is still on the throne, who would not suffer Prince Czernichew to enter his territories, when sent to notify her Majesty's *hereditary* succession to her husband; but bade him be told, he would not receive an ambassador from a murderess. Is it not shocking that the law of nations, and the law of politeness, should not yet have abrogated the laws of justice and good-sense in a nation reckoned so civilised as the Chinese? What an age do we live in, if there is still a country where the Crown does not take away all defects! Good night!

1688. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

Arlington Street, Oct. 28, 1777.

The Ursulines of Trent seem to have prayed for more than the Duke's life, for he is not emaciated nor yellow; and though one sees he has been ill, his voice is strong and his spirits good, and nothing remains of his distemper but a swelled leg; and that is decreased since his arrival. The Duchess retains more traces of her sufferings; is much leaner, and looks older, though not so much as I expected. Nothing is settled about his going to Court. Pray remember, Madam, that these are stars in eclipse, or I would not talk of them, for it is very vulgar to be interested about princes and princesses.

I know no more of America than the Ministers do. It is not quite fashionable to talk of that. The tone is, just to ask with an air of anxiety, if there is anything new, and then to be silent. A general has a fine opportunity now, for if he was to reduce a pigeon-house, I believe the King would go to St. Paul's to hear a *Te Deum*. The accession-day was not full, and those that came are gone again. The town is as empty and dull as Newmarket between the meetings. The only event I have heard since I arrived is Lady Melbourne's

being brought to bed of two girls at seven months, and they are both dead; but *she* had secured a son first. Oh! yes, the Czarina has acknowledged the Duchess of Kingston, and taken as much care of her in her yacht, in the inundation, as tender King James did of his dogs and his trunk when he was shipwrecked in Scotland. This great princess has been rather uncivilly treated by her brother the Emperor of China. She proposed to him to lay waste (a modern way of making peace) the country that separates their empires, lest they should quarrel for it. His Tartar Majesty did not send so much as a card in return; but he did write to all the Russians, I don't know by what post, to tell them that a woman, *soi-disant* Empress of Russia, had proposed to him to depopulate a country belonging to him, but that he knew better what to do with it. Strange ignorance to suppose that inhabitants enrich a country! In conclusion, his Majesty expresses his surprise that so great and wise a nation as the Russians should still submit to be governed by a creature that murdered her own husband: and yet we call the Chinese a polished nation! Mercy on us, if crowned heads were to tell one another their own!

I shall return to Strawberry in a day or two, where I think I cannot have less to tell your Ladyship than from the capital.

1639. TO THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY

Oct. 30, 1777.

I MUST confess, Madam, I cannot agree with your Ladyship in thinking Miss Barley, and Miss Oats, and Miss Rawhides, and Miss Beesom, and Miss Soap, &c., so much in the wrong for not consorting with a dancing-master's daughters. The young ladies above-named are of the best families in Ampthill, ancient gentry, that settled there before the Conquest. I know a dancing-master's is reckoned a more liberal profession, and more likely to advance him to the Irish peerage. But does Mr. Kit pay in proportion to the American war? Has he signed any address for it? Will not people learn to dance, though we should never recover the Colonies? By the good people of England, does not his Majesty mean his faithful gentry, yeomanry, and tradesmen of the kingdom? In his speech to Parliament does he ever think of dancing-masters and hair-dressers? Are they not aliens? Is his Majesty ever in their books? Or are the nobility, who are in debt to everybody else? Indeed, indeed,

Madam, I approve the spirit of the young ladies; they feel themselves; and I dare to say could scratch out the eyes of every rebellious American on the face of the earth.

The post is come in from that part of the world, and Lord Howe and General Howe were, very well thank you! two months ago. General Washington has received a defeat in the City of London, and General Burgoyne on the banks of the Seine. The Gazette itself knows no more.

I do not know that the Duchess of D.[1] has been positively ill. She thought her nerves were much affected, but it proved to be only a disorder on her spirits, occasioned by her being tired of Chatsworth. She is much better since her removal.

I am ignorant of what Mr. Morrice got by his sister's death, and whether she has got anything. I have been a week in town without being a jot more informed in any one point, and therefore shall return to-morrow to my Castle, whence, at least, my ignorance will be more excusable.

[1] Duchess of Devonshire.—CUNNINGHAM.

END OF VOL. VI.

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